



ONE ROOF

Rain does not fall on one roof alone.
Cameroonian Proverb



Fall 2009

Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Vol. 10, No. 3

The mission of ASTT is to alleviate the suffering of those who have experienced the trauma of torture, to educate the local, national, and world community about the needs of torture survivors, and to advocate on their behalf. ASTT was founded in 1994.

Dr. Karen Hanscom Elected IRCT Representative

The importance of collaboration

By Molly Corbett, Development Director

Most of our supporters already know the mission of ASTT: to alleviate the suffering of those who have experienced torture and trauma, to educate the local and world community about the needs of torture victims, and to eliminate torture in the world.

What many people don't know is how we work on the local, national and international level to fulfill our mission. ASTT is not alone in the fight to eradicate torture, but one of many organizations worldwide that strive everyday to alleviate the suffering of torture survivors and educate others about their needs.

Locally, we work with more than 40 service providers that assist our clients in health, legal and social services. Without these local partners we could not provide such a holistic approach to healing from torture.

Nationally, we are members of the

North American National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs (NCTTP). The consortium was founded in 1998 and works to advance the knowledge, technical capacities, and resources devoted to the care of torture survivors in North America and acts collectively to prevent torture worldwide.



In response to a growing need for global support and assistance in the rehabilitation of torture victims, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) was founded in 1985 as the international arm of the RCT; and, from 1997, as an international and independent organization. The IRCT is the accrediting organization for torture treatment programs throughout the world.

ASTT is proud to be a member of IRCT.

Karen Hanscom, our Executive Director, was recently elected as the North American Representative to the IRCT. We have participated in the IRCT Exchange Program in order to mentor others at our center, but also to learn from other centers around the world. We are fortunate to be a part of the Exchange Program again this Fall. We will be hosting a psychologist from the Centre for Rehabilitation and Abolition of Torture in Cameroon, where Case Manager Essence Pierce visited last fall.

“ASTT is not alone in the fight to eradicate torture”

The recognition of and treatment for torture survivors has increased dramatically since 1978. We are honored to be a part of this network of individuals and organizations who work each day to bring an end to torture and heal the scars of torture survivors.

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Visit us at www.astt.org

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Survivors' Voice:

An ASTT Client Shares His Success!

It was two years ago that I decided to escape from my country. The night of my escape I only had one thing in my mind that was to save my life, that was the reason why I took a risky way to sneak through the border and enter a neighboring country. I had to endure three more months to get to the US. I am 26 years old and a former university student from East Africa. I am a victim of torture, even though I wasn't a politician I suffered the brutal face of bloody politics where the one who had a gun ruled.

I came to the US to seek protection, breath the air of freedom and live free far from the people who wanted to destroy my life. I made a long journey to look for these. Once I arrived I thought everything would be fine; but no, it only took me seconds to look back and feel the torture and pain that was inflicted on me. Instead of celebrating I felt

lonely, I started to feel all the rough memories and pain as if it was happening to me again. I was stressed; I found it difficult to free my mind from the disturbing images and the nightmares I was experiencing. The last thing I wanted was to talk about what I had been through.

I first heard about ASTT from my brother, it was in the beginning of 2008 but it would take me some-time to go to ASTT, because I didn't expect to meet people who would listen to me, understand what I have been through and help me get over it. Once I decided to go to ASTT I was welcomed well. Soon my case manager arranged for me to meet a Psychotherapist who has been consistently helping me understand and positively deal with the emotional stress I was experiencing and look forward in my life.

It has been an enriching experience to meet people of different nationalities at ASTT's group meeting center in DC who have had the similar ex-

perience of torture and persecution in their countries of origin. People of different professions such as lawyers, police officers, and journalists have provided a lot of information on the culture and manner of life here in the US.

It would have been very difficult for me without such extraordinary counseling I was offered by ASTT to get over the emotional stress I was exper-

"Once I decided to go to ASTT I was welcomed well."

riencing and look forward in my life. ASTT has helped me get accustomed to the new culture and be part of the new society I am in.

I thank ASTT for the invaluable help they offered me at a critical moment of my life. For helping me get protection in the US. I now go to college and work part time. Now thanks to ASTT, I wake up every morning looking forward in my life.

An ASTT client from East Africa

DONATE NOW!

Visit www.astt.org to make a secure donation online!

November 14: ASTT Fundraiser!

Get a head start on your holiday shopping *AND* support ASTT!

Save The Date!

October 24:
Baltimore Interpreter Training

November 14:
Ten Thousand Villages
Cut out the coupon and support ASTT on Nov. 14th!

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Trauma (ASTT)**

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10 am-9 pm

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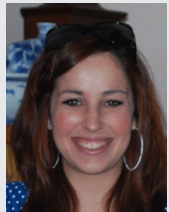


Welcome Externs!



Josh Semiatin is a psychology doctoral student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

He received his master's degree in clinical psychology last year from Loyola College. Among his main psychology interests are post-trauma recovery and growth for both individuals and families as a whole. Outside of school, Josh enjoys reading, watching documentaries, and traveling.



Lauren Chandler, M.S., is in her fourth year at Loyola University's Psy.D. program in Clinical Psychology.

She received her B.A. in Psychology at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Her previous experience includes work at the D.C. Rape Crisis Center, individuals and couples counseling at the Loyola Clinical Centers, and neuropsychological evaluations at the Baltimore VA. She is originally from Florida and wishes the beach was a little bit closer!



Gitika Talwar is a graduate student in the Human Services Psychology Program (Clinical-Community psychology track) at University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

She is from India and her clinical experience includes working as a therapist in India and a clinical extern at the New Behaviors Program for Men. Her interest in working with ASTT is part of her larger interest in providing therapeutic services to people who have lived in conflict zones across the world.

ASTT Begins Healing Images Photo Group

Led by well-known photojournalist

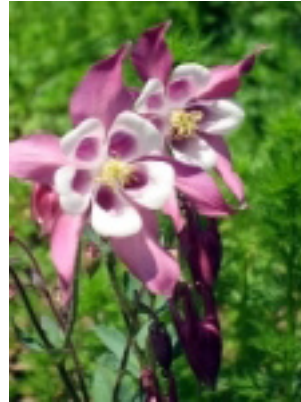
On October 23rd, a photo group titled 'Healing Images' will begin for our clients. This is the second group of its kind to be held at ASTT. Participants will be loaned digital cameras and given basic photography instruction in a supportive therapeutic setting.

Through a series of weekly photography classes this program will offer survivors of torture and severe trauma a unique opportunity to creatively reflect on their past, examine their present, and build upon their strengths to arrive at a new place of greater peace and healing.

Holding the camera in one's hands, choosing its subject, organizing the frame, pressing the shutter, marveling at the results, and freeing the tangle within have proven powerful therapeutic steps to help increase an individual's sense of him-

or herself as active survivor rather than passive victim.

This year's program will be led by **Monica**



From previous photo group

Lopossay, a seasoned photojournalist with ten years experience. Her work has spanned five continents, resulting in three Pulitzer nominations and honors from the Office of The President and Congress.

She has covered a range of assignments including the war in Iraq, Haiti's health care crisis, and Hurricane Katrina. She has made it her life's dedication to

serve the public through the power of still images, be that on a personal or global level.

Monica says, "Photography is a universal language and an amazing tool for self discovery. I've been able to experience how a single photograph can shape the future, reflect the past and certainly bring revelations to the present. I am honored to teach the Healing Images program, which helps heal the psychological and emotional scars of torture survivors through the use of photography."

For more information about the Healing Images program or to schedule an exhibit at your congregation, school, organization or business please email Essence Pierce at epierce@astt.org.

Join us on Facebook!: Search for Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (ASTT)

Join the MD Charity Campaign

Support ASTT with a Maryland State matched gift! MD State employees and retirees can choose between regular payroll deductions and/or a one-time gift by cash, check, or credit card made to ASTT. **ASTT's Charity Campaign number is #8815.**

THANK YOU Joanie Hodges!

ASTT's Development Associate for the past year is leaving ASTT for graduate school in England. Good luck Joanie! We will miss you!

Message from the Executive Director:



An important component of ASTT's mission is to impact policies and issues of importance to torture survivors nationally and internationally. Most often in our newsletters we report on ASTT's treatment program; this month I would like to describe our national and international involvement.

ASTT has been accredited for many years by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) based in Denmark. I am honored to have been recently elected as the only United States North American Representative to the IRCT Council.

This not only allows for a U.S. voice on issues related to torture, but also adds to ASTT's ability to make an impact internationally. I will begin this work in November at a meeting of the IRCT Council in Nairobi, Kenya.

For many years, ASTT has also been a member of the only national organization for torture treatment, the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs (NCTTP). As an active member and participant, ASTT has worked nationally on such activities as: the U.S. Torture Victim Relief Act, congressional briefings and hearings, on issues related to torture, and national data collection. It has been an honor to serve on the Executive Committee of the NCTTP since its inception.

Though at times we all feel small, both as individuals and as an organization,

it is always important to step back and recognize that ASTT is in fact doing all that it can to make a difference nationally and internationally.

The issue of torture is immense and the work to be done to treat and advocate for survivors is overwhelming.

However, each of you, as readers of our newsletter, volunteers, and dedicated donors: please know that torture survivors locally, nationally, and internationally benefit from your involvement.

Sincerely,



Karen Hanscom, PhD.
ASTT Executive Director

