



ECLIPSE

WINTER 1988

THE SHANTI PROJECT NEWSLETTER

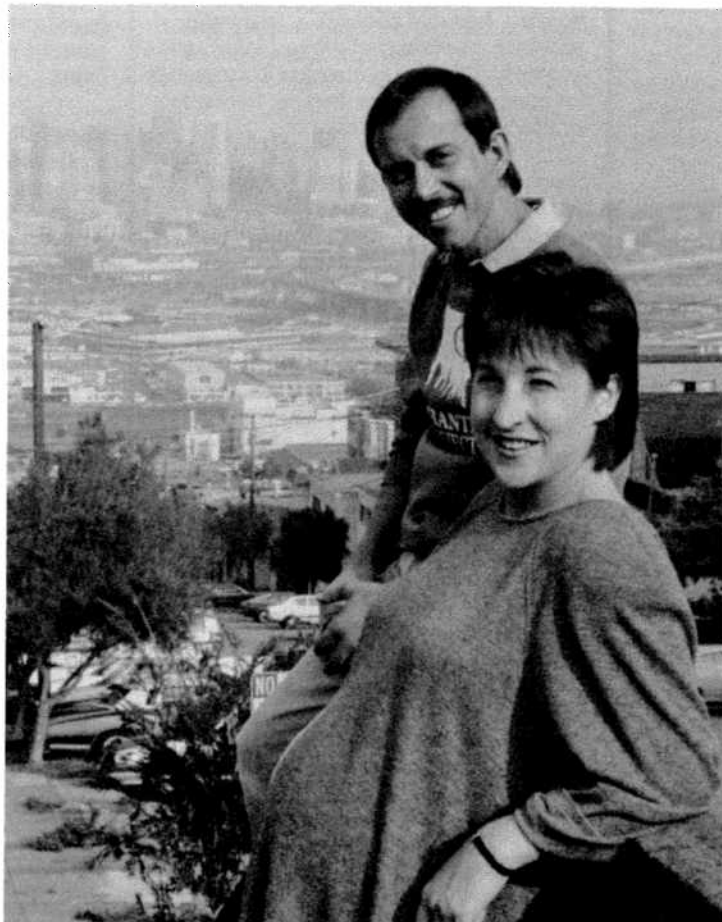
SYDNEY AND MIGUEL

by Mary Richards

It's a sunny Sunday afternoon in Potrero Hill. Sydney, a Shanti volunteer, is busily vacuuming Miguel's apartment. Large windows look out over a courtyard, and the hills of the city can be seen in the distance. The apartment is beautifully decorated. Maya, Miguel's grey kitty, lounges and cleans herself while carefully keeping an eye on everyone present.

Miguel Rovirosa is Sydney Dygert's second Shanti client, and to be in the same room with both of them is an enlightening experience. There is a lot of laughter, as they banter back and forth trying to explain their relationship. "My primary need was for someone to come in and clean. When Sydney first arrived, I said what I needed was the same kind of cleaning that you would want done in your house and Sydney said, 'Oh, no you don't!' In mock seriousness, Miguel adds, "I tried to fire her this morning, but she said she doesn't get paid enough to get fired!"

Although young and vigorous, Sydney does seem to be a bit chubby. I ask her to tell a bit about herself, but Miguel answers first: "She's pregnant!" They both begin to giggle as Sydney yells, "I'm pregnant!" It's true, she is indeed pregnant, and the baby is due any week now. This fact precipitates a related topic.



Miguel Rovirosa and Sydney Dygert

Practical Support and say my last volunteer just had a baby in the house, get me a new one!"

Sydney: "That's right. Shanti can handle everything, get them over here!"

Miguel and Sydney had just been on a panel for the most recent Shanti volunteer training, where, Miguel informs us, the pair was dubbed Abbott and Costello. It doesn't take more than a few moments of observation to see why.

My next question seems appropriate: "How long have you been married?" "I'm not married," Sydney explains. Miguel adds in a shocked tone, "An unwed mother...how did you get pregnant?" Sydney responds, (and now we are all laughing) "It was immaculate!" The remarks are funny, but as we all know, motherhood can be a serious occupation. "I decided not to get married," Sydney acknowledges. "I wanted to have a child, but I didn't want to get married. We keep separate resi-

Miguel: "I think it's time for her to rest, it's only a couple a weeks away and I don't want her waddling around the house."

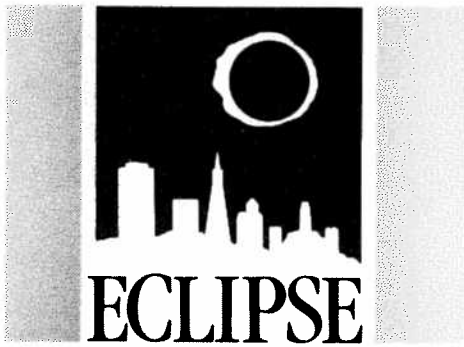
Sydney: "He doesn't want the baby to be born on his carpet!"

Miguel: "That will be okay! We'll just call

dences, and it works out much better that way. I have my space and he has his. I have met a lot of people who have decided to be single parents. I don't really think of myself as a single parent, because the baby's father is very much a part of this. But I guess that's the label they give you."

(Cont. on page 4)

GREG DAY



THE SHANTI PROJECT NEWSLETTER

TODAY AT SHANTI

Services Increase For People With AIDS



MICHAEL LEWELLAN

Greg Day

by Greg Day
PUBLIC EDUCATION DIRECTOR

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WINTER 1988

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Shanti is a Sanskrit word meaning "inner peace."

The Shanti Project logo is an eclipse, a circle within a square. The circle portrays the inner world of the mind. The square conveys the solid reality of earth and body. United, they indicate the wholeness of the human being.

An eclipse is the passage from light to darkness and the return to light. For Shanti Project, it represents the changes brought about by illness and death, the darkness that can fall upon people experiencing these events, and the light that can follow in the wake of volunteers who bring love and caring.

Tandy Belew created the logo.

Founded in 1974, Shanti Project is a non-profit organization providing free volunteer services to people with AIDS and their loved ones. Today, Shanti has over 600 trained community volunteers providing direct person to person support to people with AIDS and their loved ones. Shanti offers emotional and practical support, housing, hospital counseling, recreational activities, peer support groups, information and referral, and public education trainings for community groups seeking to create similar support services.

Shanti's Emotional Support Volunteers work on a one-to-one basis providing emotional support, companionship, patient advocacy, information and friendship. This program is based on the concept of non-judgmental active listening and is founded on the belief that each person, with support, can find their own answers to the often troubling questions associated with living with AIDS and issues of grief.

Shanti's weekly drop-in support groups for people with AIDS, their families, friends and lovers are led by experienced facilitators and provide persons dealing with similar situations a safe place to support one another. Specialized support groups for women, couples, youth and children who have AIDS or whose family member has AIDS are also offered.

Practical Support volunteers focus on the functional needs of people with AIDS and their loved ones. Volunteers help with shopping, laundry, cleaning, cooking, and childcare. These services enable a person with AIDS to continue to live at home with more comfort.

Shanti staff counselors at San Francisco General Hospital offer emotional support to in-patients with AIDS and their loved ones, and to out-patients with AIDS on Ward 86. These counselors provide crucial support to those dealing with issues of new diagnosis, treatment options, life support and discharge planning. Shanti-facilitated support groups are also available in this setting.

Low-cost housing for 47 adult persons with AIDS is provided by Shanti's Residence Program for those who seek a safe and stable living situation. These residences provide a home environment with private rooms. Residents are able to use their own furnishings and to utilize community-donated Shanti property. Although the houses are maintained by Shanti, the concept of this program is independent living.

Shanti's Recreation Program offers ongoing social events, outings, special holiday celebrations and weekend retreats for people with AIDS. Free tickets are made available for persons with AIDS for attending theater, ballet and many other entertainment events.

Shanti's Information and Referral staff answer callers' questions regarding a variety of concerns. Persons can inquire about a wide array of services available to people with AIDS and their loved ones. Frequently asked questions concern symptoms of AIDS, AIDS antibody test sites and information about Shanti programs.

Shanti's Speakers Bureau consists of trained people with AIDS, volunteers and staff who offer presentations on psychosocial issues, grief, death and dying, living with AIDS and an overview of Shanti services. These speakers also help groups discuss their own feelings and issues regarding AIDS.

Shanti's Videotape Training Materials offer a complete guide to our emotional support training. These training materials are designed to be used as a resource to other organizations involved in the training of volunteers.

In the coming year, Shanti Project volunteers will provide 128,000 hours of free one-to-one counseling to 1,170 people with AIDS and 1,130 of their loved ones.

DIARY OF A PRACTICAL SUPPORT TRAINING

by Danny Castelow
PRACTICAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

FRIDAY

6:30 p.m.

There is excitement in the air. It is the first night of the Practical Support Training weekend. The trainees have all completed applications and have been interviewed. The 60 trainees are nervous, overwhelmed, overjoyed and eager. Seventeen volunteer facilitators and staff members are present to offer whatever support will be needed. In a few moments each person will be asked to share their hopes and fears as the twenty-three hour training unfolds.

10:00 p.m.

The first evening comes to an end. Trainees are hugging, exchanging names, offering rides home. The incredible bonding that takes place with each training class has begun. Earlier this evening they viewed a video presentation on AIDS Home Care, and participated in an exercise where they were asked to sit with a partner and look into each others eyes. As they leave the building everyone is encouraged to "be gentle with yourself."

SATURDAY

9:00 a.m.

Prospective volunteers meet in small

groups where they have an opportunity to bond more intimately and have their questions answered. One of the trainees expresses that he still has fear of doing this work, "I'm so afraid of saying the wrong thing, or my client being disappointed in me." Another group member shared, "If I could make it through those introductions last night, I can do anything!"

12:45 p.m. — Lunch

The pot luck table is spread with at least twenty-five pasta salads, chicken, turkey, ham, cheeses and breads. A second table has been set up just for desserts! Everyone is hungry after the morning session consisting of a medical overview and the powerful death personalization exercise. During the death personalization, trainees are asked to imagine their own diagnosis and the reaction of their family and friends. Some trainees appear playful and euphoric, while others are a little distant as they continue to open to what the exercise brought up for them.

5:00 p.m.

The second day of the training comes to an end. In the afternoon an invited panel of people with AIDS and their Practical Sup-

port Volunteers talked about the significance of their relationships. Many were moved by the panel members candor, humor, courage and love. For some of the trainees, it was their first time being with a person with AIDS. The panel was followed by a non-verbal exercise in which persons are paired and feed one another.

SUNDAY

9:00 a.m.

Participants begin filling up the two circles of chairs that have been set for the "Letting Go of Grief" session. We begin with a meditation after which Diana Ross's recording of "Missing You" is played. Anyone who is moved to speak is encouraged to share the essence of their grief. One trainee is grieving about his lover who died from AIDS a year ago. A member of our staff is grieving the death of a former co-worker. Another trainee shares the pain of being rejected by her family because of her desire to support people with AIDS. There is an incredible air of healing in the room as the exercise comes to an end. Everyone is asked to say the names aloud of friends and loved ones who have died. Some have waited years for this opportunity to let go. (Cont. on page 6)



Practical Support Training at The Completion of their Training

ANDY LA VENTURE

SYDNEY AND MIGUEL
Continued from page 1

Miguel and Sydney have been together nearly eight months. Sydney explains that because of Shanti's extensive training, she never had a worry about her being pregnant and working with a person with AIDS. "I didn't feel that there would be a problem at all, but I did check with my doctor, and he said by all means, 'go ahead.' I've had no health problems whatsoever, and I haven't wanted to give up my work with Shanti."

Miguel recalls how he and his lover, John Siebrandt, decided to investigate the services Shanti had to offer. Their flat was being renovated and it was time to relocate. "John and I needed help moving, so we called Practical Support," Miguel remembers. "Prior to that we hadn't used Shanti because we thought that to have someone come into the house would mean that I was getting sicker."

"Both of us were forewarned about each other," Sydney says. "Danny, a Shanti staff volunteer coordinator, called me and told me about Miguel. He said, 'You two are going to work out beautifully, you both have a great sense of humor and you'll get along really well.'" Miguel adds, "And Danny told me, 'You're going to love Sydney, she's really crazy. She's a nut!'"

Miguel reminisces about their first meeting. "Well, Shanti told me that this wild woman was going to come and clean my house. When I buzzed her through the gate, she was dressed in this little jacket and a

smart skirt. I thought, 'Oh no, it's a Dress-for-Success type. This couldn't be the one Shanti told me about. Maybe they switched her on me!'" Sydney responds: "I dressed just for you that day! I got off work and I knew I was coming here and I wanted to look really good for you. I didn't want to be rejected!"

Because Sydney spends her Sundays cleaning Miguel's home, he is able to use his energy to volunteer. "We have an AIDS group at Presbyterian Hospital," he says. "We offer emotional and practical support for people who are in the hospital. Being part of a group is important to me. That's another reason why Sydney has been so great. If I did the housework, that would completely wipe me out for a couple of days. Sydney's help gives me the time to do something I want to do."

One of the other things they were both involved in recently was a stint on "Hour Magazine," a nationally-televised morning talk show which originates from Los Angeles. Sydney describes it: "I can tell you one thing, I was very scared. Miguel was wonderful. Everything he said was great. I was just stunned. I couldn't even look at Gary Collins, who's the host. I looked at my shoes and mumbled a lot. Miguel stole the show."

Miguel modestly denies that, but there's no doubt that he must have made an impression. "I said there was no cure for AIDS right now," Miguel recalls, "but the only thing we could do for people with AIDS is to heal them with love. And then I said, 'Mr. Presi-

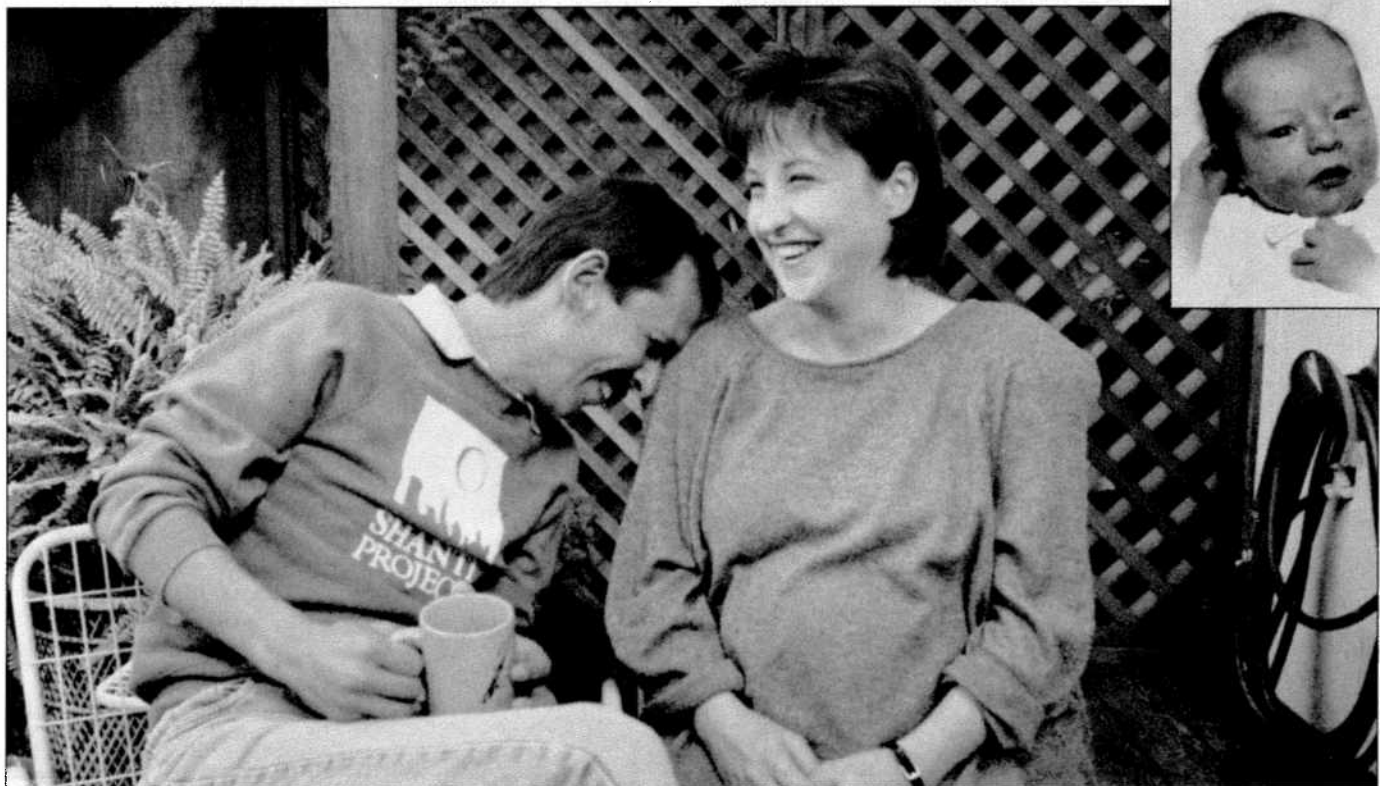
dent..." Sydney interrupts, laughing, "And then the people behind the camera started to gulp!" Miguel says seriously, "I just said that he needs to start releasing money. He needs to start funding AIDS programs because we're dying."

Miguel thinks the audience probably enjoyed the show. "The audience was great," he acknowledges. "And after they finished taping it, one elderly lady turned around and said, 'God bless you.'"

When talking to Miguel and Sydney, one can see how their shared experiences will continue to enrich their lives. I asked Sydney what Shanti meant to her. "Shanti has been a wonderful place for me as far as meeting some really good people. My support group is wonderful. They're always there for me, supporting me. It's like a second family, an extended family. I can always call up if I'm having problems. It's been a good year for me."

Miguel sums it up a little differently. "Practical Support is a blessing, and I think that the services that are provided are great, especially the volunteers. In addition to offering practical support, she also is my friend. I find myself looking forward to Sundays, because I know Sydney's on her way. It's like a little added boost to know that the fat lady's coming!"

(Editors Note: Two weeks after this interview, on November 30, 1987, Sydney gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Paloma. Miguel is visiting them in the hospital.)



GREG DAY

Miguel and Sydney and Paloma (inset)

PRACTICAL SUPPORT VAN PROGRAM

by Randy Chelsey
PRACTICAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

When the Practical Support Program was created in July 1983, we wanted a program to help meet the every day needs of people with AIDS such as cooking, cleaning and shopping.

Soon after the first training we found that transportation to medical appointments was the task most often requested and since many of our volunteers work during the day, it was a task we were rarely able to provide. Most medical appointments are scheduled during the day time. We also found that people who need help with house cleaning usually needed help getting to their doctor appointments as well.

We heard harrowing stories of people with AIDS, who after receiving intense medical treatments, had to transfer to two or three buses.

We wrote a grant to purchase a van and hired Daniel Brewer as our first driver. Daniel began with Shanti as an emotional support volunteer. He has a strong desire to help others and is a kind and gentle man. Daniel contributed much to establish the van program we have today.

I held weekly support and supervision meetings with Daniel. A good portion of these meetings was spent in grieving about the men and women Daniel transported daily. After a year Daniel was hired as a Shanti staff counselor for the AIDS outpatient clinic at San Francisco General Hospital.

Joe Healy was hired to replace Daniel. Joe, like Daniel, started with Shanti as an emotional support volunteer. Joe combines tremendous compassion with an outrageous sense of humor. He thoroughly enjoys his work and the riders, some of whom he transports daily to hospitals throughout San Francisco.

Joe provides round trips from clients' homes to hospitals, doctors' offices, acupuncturists, dentists, psychologists and other healthcare providers. He's regularly able to fit up to eleven people a day into his schedule, although on occasion he has somehow stretched that number to fifteen.

Joe consistently remains supportive with all of his riders, even those people who, because of their physical and emotional pain are occasionally short with him.

Joe is well known and respected at many of the city hospitals. Recently when he had knee surgery, the hospital staff turned out

(Cont. on page 6)



Yvonne Luquis Ortega

MICHAEL LEWELLAN



Joe Healy

MICHAEL LEWELLAN

VAN PROGRAM

Continued from page 5

in full force to support him. During Easter Joe brings his collections of exotic hats and bonnets for the riders to wear! He always drives in a great costume on Halloween!

A year after Joe was hired, we found ourselves deluged with even more transportation requests. A grant was written and another van purchased and driver hired.

We converted one van to make it wheelchair accessible to provide rides to people we could not otherwise assist. Yvonne Luquis Ortega was hired in March of 1987. We are very fortunate that Yvonne is fluent in Spanish. Yvonne was raised in Puerto Rico.

I spent a morning riding with Yvonne on her route to get a better sense of what her job involved. We picked up five riders. Three of them needed to go to San Francisco General Hospital, one to Franklin Hospital and one to Kaiser.

Yvonne is very vivacious, yet doesn't overwhelm the slower moving riders. Most of her riders are regulars. Two riders are Latinos and immediately begin speaking Spanish with her. I realize these are ongoing relationships.

We stop at one house and Yvonne knocks at the door. A man emerges with his roommate who is carrying an oxygen tank. He hands the tank to Yvonne who carries it in

one hand as she chatters away to her rider, her other arm around his waist. Yvonne opens the door of the van and sets down the portable step. As the man climbs into the van, she sings a song to him, leaps back into the driver's seat and introduces me.

The next person on the pickup schedule is a former landscape architect. He tells us he is selling his truck because is unable to drive. The man with the oxygen tank discusses his own experiences selling items through newspaper ads.

We next pick up a young man who has just lost his sight. His lover accompanies him. Even before he gets into the van he is telling Yvonne about the puppy he spent time with the previous afternoon; the puppy was provided through an animal shelter program for people with AIDS. The other riders all chimed in with their own pet stories.

We are now at San Francisco General Hospital and all three men say goodbye and go in for their treatment. Yvonne assists the man with the oxygen tank.

Fifteen minutes later we are on a small side street and Yvonne is maneuvering the large vehicle expertly. The rider we pick up here obviously does not feel well. He gets into the van very slowly, leans back from exhaustion and closes his eyes. Yvonne and I automatically quiet ourselves. Somehow the beautiful sunlit days feels incon-

gruous. At Kaiser Hospital, Yvonne helps him out of the van with infinite gentleness and patience.

Back in the van, Yvonne and I exchange a "knowing" look and before we have a chance to talk, the beeper announces that our riders are ready to go home from San Francisco General. "Right on schedule," Yvonne replies.

On the way to San Francisco General Hospital, we stop and pick up an older man. As he speaks to Yvonne, alternating in Spanish and English, he discusses his treatment and how he feels about the course he's chosen. He and Yvonne take turns filling me in, in English.

We drop him off at his home near Franklin Hospital and continue on our way back to San Francisco General Hospital. The blind man and his lover, as well as the landscape architect await us. Our friend with the oxygen tank has been admitted to the hospital.

After dropping off these riders, Yvonne and I return to the office. My watch says it is only noon. I'm exhausted.

Yvonne's beeper goes off. The Kaiser Hospital Rider is ready. She takes off waving goodbye.



ANDY LA VENTURE

Participants of Practical Support Training During Touch Exercises

PRACTICAL SUPPORT Continued from page 3

The afternoon session addresses issues concerning cross cultural values and mores and how to support clients of different cultural, spiritual, class and family backgrounds. This session is followed by role plays (demonstrated scripts of interaction) in which skills are taught regarding how we can best serve our clients.

4:14 p.m.

Everyone curls up on sleeping bags and blankets and views a video of Gary Walsh, a person with AIDS. Gary speaks about love as the best response to AIDS. Trainees are thoughtful as Gary tells us, "As corny as it may sound, love really is the answer."

6:15 p.m.

Closing Circle. It's hard to believe that this is the same group of people that came together two nights ago. Everyone seems so much softer and vulnerable. The new volunteers are representative of many different ethnic communities, sexual orientations, professions and ages. As I slip my arms around the two people on each side of me, tears begin to fall. I wonder how many more people will take time to join with us to provide support services to people with AIDS. I hope there will always be enough.

The Shanti Project, a volunteer-based organization, welcomes financial contributions from those who appreciate our efforts and want to help. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the Shanti Project, 525 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105.

I would like to support the Shanti Project with a donation of:

\$15.00 \$25.00 \$50.00 \$100.00 Other \$ _____

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SPECIAL THANKS

We extend a special thank you to the businesses, foundations and groups that have donated funds Shanti over the past several years. Your contributions, together with those from over 18,000 individuals have made it possible for us to continue and expand our vital services. Thank you.

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SHANTI VIDEOTAPES

The **Shanti** Project is proud to announce the availability of our complete volunteer training program on videotape. Videotapes of the training program can be used by any group wishing to start an organization to provide volunteer counseling. These training materials are designed to be used both as a resource by the organizers of a new group and in the training of volunteer counselors.

For more information about the **Shanti** training videotapes, call the **Shanti** Project office at (415) 777-CARE.