

HEALTH PROJECT FOR SOUTH ASIAN SENIORS

A Needs Assessment Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This short five month project was designed to address the health needs of the South Asian seniors. The components of this project consisted of conducting a needs assessment of the health issues faced by seniors, developing awareness within the community regarding those health issues which were identified in the needs assessment, organizing nutritional classes based on adult experiential learning methods, developing culturally appropriate resources and building partnerships within the South Asian communities and its organizations.

We hope to share the findings of our needs assessment study with the South Asian communities. It is our intention to distribute this report as widely as possible so that the health needs of the seniors are addressed.

The majority of the seniors had expressed that:

- we should continue with this project. Five months is a very short time to make any significant impact and changes in the life of any community.
- their self-esteem is directly linked to financial security. They have no sources or very little sources of income. They wanted us to let the "funders" know that they are not asking for "handouts" but are asking for the development of "skill sharing" and "self-sustaining" projects.
- those projects be funded which enhance the community's consciousness on the issue of elder abuse.
- those projects be funded, which attempt to unify all South Asian seniors groups in order to build partnerships and use the existing resources better. Only by working together can we (seniors) address the issues of transportation, racism, financial insecurity, safety, language problem, active living, alternative medical treatment, inter-generational and inter-cultural gaps with in families, building a senior's home, and developing culturally appropriate resources.

We hope that this needs assessment study will become a catalyst in addressing the health needs of the South Asian seniors. As one South Asian senior said "together we can achieve and overcome almost anything". We believe we can.