

ALPHA

Newsflash



www.torontoalpha.org

Winter 2013 issue



Happy New Year message

Dear friends and supporters,

As 2013 is upon us this is a time for reflection on the year that has just come to a close and the creation of plans, resolutions and goals moving into the New Year. At Toronto ALPHA we have big ideas, and 2013 will be focused on continuing to put these ideas into action. We hope to deepen our engagement with youth through dialogues, conferences, summer programs and a volunteer orientation and mentoring program. We hope to strengthen our support for educators by providing new and cutting edge resources, and training workshops, to incorporate the forgotten history of WWII in Asia into the classroom. We hope to nurture our connection to the community with an accessible Resource Centre, ongoing public awareness events and cross-community collaborations.

Importantly, we are committed to continuing this work from a global humanity perspective; focusing on what we can and must learn from the past to move towards a more just and peaceful tomorrow. Please join us in 2013.

The ALPHA Team

THOUGHT EXCHANGE

'Women and War' lecture as part of the Toronto Public Library Thought Exchange program!

Location: Leaside Library, 165 McRae Drive (Bayview and Eglinton)

Date: Thursday January 17, 2013

Time: 2:00-3:30pm

This lecture will deal with the issue of women and war, specifically looking at how women are treated under the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery system. In cultures where women are generally regarded as inferior to men, they usually suffer the most harm during wartimes in terms of being casualties, dealing with sexual violence and consequentially unwanted pregnancies, STIs, stigmatization, as well as dealing with discrimination and inequality after the war has ended. Topics covered will also include how women are represented in war and peace processes, and action that is being taken to prevent gender discrimination and sexual violence against women. Excerpts of the documentary *Within Every Woman*, which depicts the stories of three Japanese Military Sexual Slavery survivors after their traumatic experiences, will be shown.

Youth Ambassador Board inaugural meeting

Location: Yonge and Bloor - RSVP for exact address – sally.ding@torontoalpha.org

Date: Monday January 14, 2013

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

The ALPHA Youth Ambassador Board consists of engaged students, volunteers and young professionals. The board meets once a month to discuss current history and social justice issues, create mentorship opportunities and plan youth engagement initiatives such as the biannual Youth Dialogue.

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75th Anniversary of Nanking Massacre Commemorative Events



The Path from Amnesia to Remembrance: The 75th Anniversary of Nanking Massacre

One of the most horrific atrocities committed in human history was the Nanking Massacre. During a six-week period beginning on December 13, 1937 in Nanking, capital of China, the Japanese Imperial Army brutally raped, tortured, and murdered more than 300,000 Chinese people. Seventy five years have elapsed since that time, yet this atrocity remains relatively obscure in public awareness, while the memories and legacies of this history continue to have a profound impact. In commemoration Toronto ALPHA hosted a variety of programs to engage students, educators and the community.

Holocaust Education Week Panel Discussion

A joint program between Toronto ALPHA, Facing History and Ourselves, and New College at the University of Toronto, the CBC's Karin Well's moderated a thought-provoking panel discussion with novelist Joy Kogawa, educator Gerry Connelly, playwright Diana Tso, and Fran Sterling, Senior Research and Development Associate, Facing History. Together we explored how art and education can lay the foundation of peace, reconciliation and healing for the victims, their communities, and our global community.



Candlelight Vigil and Community Forum

On December 9th, 2012, a candlelight vigil and community forum was joined by Ms. Tamaki Matsuoka – a peace activist and film-maker from Japan and Mr. Chang Chu-Yeh – a Nanking Massacre survivor. The event was well attended by community leaders, educators, politicians, students, and over 300 members of the public. Ms. Tamaki Matsuoka screened her documentary film "Torn Memories of Nanking," featuring testimonials from Japanese veterans and Chinese survivors for the first time in Toronto.



History meets Humanity Student Conference

With the support of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and Ontario Human Rights Commission we offered History meets Humanity, a 1 day conference for students and their teachers to connect learning the history of WWII in Asia with understanding humanity through engaging with educators, peace activists, survivors, and community leaders.

Comments from student participants:

- ▶ "I like the way the ALPHA organization is really working hard to promote peace and love. Not only this, but how they are making us realize that we should not forget what happened in history."
- ▶ The thing I liked best was... "Learning the actual experiences and testimonies from people who went through that time."
- ▶ The question I still have is... "Why can't we change faster?"
- ▶ In the future I will... "Support the movement for justice and inform others."



City Proclamation & Photo Exhibition



To raise public awareness of this tragic chapter of WWII in Asia, City Councillor (Rosedale-Centre) Kristyn Wong-Tam successfully moved the motion to proclaim December 13th the "Nanking Recognition Day" at the Toronto City Council, despite the Mayor's initial opposition. With support from the office of Councillor Wong-Tam, a photo exhibition on WWII in Asia took place at the Toronto City Rotunda from November 27th to December 2nd with authentic archives from museums in China and Korea.



Joseph Wong on Rape of Nanking (Hr. 3)

The Rape of Nanking is one of the most violent and least known moments of modern history. This is the 75th anniversary of the attack and occupation of Nanking, then the capital of China, by the Japanese. As many as three hundred thousand Chinese were murdered in acts of unrelenting barbarism. Michael talks to **Joseph Wong** who established an internationally recognized organization to remember that history and cultivate its lessons. On December 13, 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army captured Nanking... China's capital city.



To learn more about the Nanking Massacre click here to listen to Toronto ALPHA Founder and Chair of the Board, Dr. Joseph Wong, interviewed on the CBC Sunday Edition with Michael Enright

Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/thesundayedition/shows/2012/12/09/joseph-wong-on-the-rape-of-nanking-hr-3/>

Join us

Thank you for supporting the 2012 Fundraising Dinner– Building Hope

This year's fundraising dinner started with vibrant youth entertainers. Our returned emcees then led over 500 audience members through the program with ease. The encouragement and support for ALPHA were displayed by speakers and school boards throughout the evening. The highlight was the video that featured ALPHA youth volunteers and Human-iTEAM participants. Their passion and dedication touched everyone's hearts and left everyone with much appreciation of ALPHA's effort to build hope for coming years. Thank you!



Suzie Lee, grade 10 student and volunteer at Toronto ALPHA:

"Volunteering at ALPHA is very enjoyable. ALPHA is not only trying to promote peace and reconciliation based on conflicts of the past, but is working on promoting awareness to a wider audience to make a better future based on what is learnt from history. I've wanted to gain more knowledge and let other people know about this topic as well, and volunteering at ALPHA is helping me to do that. Being a Korean-Canadian, although born in Korea, I lived in Canada all my life and was not aware of anything that happened in Korea's history. Through volunteering here, I have been able to experience many events and help in the process which is really encouraging me to think bigger. Volunteering here also gives me an opportunity to meet new people where I am able to see more opinions and ideas. In the end, I realize that every person really does make a difference after seeing all the people here who work together in order to achieve one goal."

Call for volunteers

Are you an avid reader? Student or retiree, living in Canada or abroad, Toronto ALPHA is calling all those who love reading to volunteer 8-10 hours to review materials for educators, students and the general public. For more detailed information contact sarah.bleiwas@torontoalpha.org



NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS:

SARAH BLEIWAS, JUDY CHO, SALLY DING, SUZIE LEE

Call for testimonials

Are you a survivor of World War II in Asia? Do you have friends or relatives who experienced this war? Eyewitness accounts unite personal experience with history in a way that is extraordinary in power when shared with youth and students. We welcome individuals to meet with us and share their personal testimonies via text or video. For more detailed information contact sarah.bleiwas@torontoalpha.org



ALPHA NEWSFLASH

SUMMER 2013 ISSUE

www.torontoalpha.org

“I AM SORRY”

“When soldiers are risking their lives by running through storms of bullets, and you want to give these emotionally charged soldiers a rest somewhere, it’s clear that you need a comfort-women system,” he told reporters. “Anyone can understand that.”

Remarks made by Hashimoto, Mayor of Osaka, May 2013

Hashimoto’s ‘remark’ reflects his deep-rooted patriarchal values which are very often glorified at wartime - physical strength and brutal forces are rewarded and associated with masculinity. Hence, violence against women has traditionally been further legitimised during times of peace. The rooted patriarchal culture in Japan normalized the subjugation of women in the male dominating society. Sex was naturally adopted as a symbol of conquest and power over women. In war, the ideology of masculine sexuality is usually inter-correlated with extreme racism and nationalism, inherently driven by violence. Abusing the bodies of women belonging to the conquered nation or race thus symbolizes power and dominance of the conqueror. The extensive raping of women of the ‘other’ races by the Japanese army also embedded the politics of racial hierarchy that further justified their brutal acts.

These rationales underpinning the self-justified denial of Hashimoto are further exemplified by his other comment: “It is not fair to blame only Japan, as if the violation of human rights of women by soldiers were a problem unique to the Japanese soldiers”. Like a spoiled child seeking justification for getting

whatever he desires, and whining ‘everybody is doing it, so why can’t I’, Hashimoto now sees Japan a victim of injustice instead.

It has been sixty-eight years since the Second World War ended, twenty-two years since the first testimonials were made by Kim Hak-soon and the first ‘Wednesday Demonstration’ was organized in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Thirteen years have gone by since the Women’s War Crimes Tribunal convicted Hirohito guilty, and five years since parliamentary motions were passed in various democratic countries including Canada, pressing for apology from the Japanese government to all war-time sexual slavery victims. In-between the years, many survivors could not wait and perished together with their memories and pain.

Despite international condemnations including the UN’s recognition of the ‘comfort women’ system as crimes against humanity in 1996, there is yet any official apology from the Japanese government, or resolution passed in the Japanese Diet to recognise and apologize for any wartime responsibilities. Spokespersons of the Japanese government... (cont.)

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including the prime ministers¹ have been flipping sides on recognition and denial in the past two decades whereas 'comfort women' issue had been totally removed from Japanese textbooks since 2006. Following his revisionist predecessor Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Toru Hashimoto, as the co-leader of the far-right Japan Restoration Party and Mayor of Osaka, goes one step further. While Abe publicly denied the involvement of Japanese Imperial Army in the sexual slavery system in 2007, Hashimoto now ruthlessly justifies the existence of 'comfort women' system.

The poem *I am Sorry* is composed by Sarantos Minopetros, dedicating to the survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery after he attended the symposium on "Re-memory of comfort women" at University of Nottingham UK. While the poem has touched us deeply by seeping into the broken souls and bodies of those afflicted, its title *I am Sorry* is exactly what Abe, Hashimoto, and the Japanese government have to say to all of the young girls who were only 11, or 13 or 16 seventy years ago...

By Flora Chong

I AM SORRY

*I am sorry I was born human...
 I was 11 years old...
 I was 13 years old...
 I was 16 years old...
 I was just a pure little candle only starting to learn how to shine...
 In the darkness of the fiercest storm cruel hands grabbed me...
 In gloomy cells they drove me...
 In barracks they were stealing my light ... pieces from my flesh... fragments from my soul...
 Many little candles melted, were trampled under bestial bodies.. stinky breaths and barbarous cheers...
 But as long as my candle still burns... I will never stop to speak of justice and of my lost dream...
 There will come one day when the fear and the silence will no longer feast in the Palace of Lethe...
 Everybody will know of that storm that took the light of so many souls...
 I was 11 years old...
 I was 13 years old...
 I was 16 years old...
 Yes! I was the light that got lost in the darkness of humans...
 In the eternal night...
 an apology is the tiniest candle for those souls that were lost in the storm of wartime...
 I am sorry...*

Sarantos Minopetros (in Greek, translated by Dr Chrysanthi Gallou)

¹July 1995, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama recognized that " the involvement of the Japanese military forces of the time seriously stained the honor and dignity of many women. This is entirely inexcusable. I offer my profound apology to all those who, as wartime comfort women, suffered emotional and physical wounds that can never be closed" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9507.html>; in March 2007, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said there was no evidence that women were forced to become sex slaves by the Japanese army during World War II.. BBC News Asia <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19725705>

IN THE NEWS

[May 30]

The Mayor and the Comfort Women - The New Yorker

[May 28]

Embattled Hashimoto cancels planned June visit to United States - The Asahi Shimbun

[May 16]

Is Japan struggling with its wartime past – CNN

[May 16]

Okinawa women's groups condemn Hashimoto Justification of sex slaves - The Japan Times

[May 7]

Will history again trip up Prime Minister Shinzo Abe? - The Asahi Shimbun

[April 26]

Shinzo Abe's inability to face history - The Washington Post

HISTORY MEETS HUMANITY

STUDENT CONFERENCE ON WWII IN ASIA

With the support of the Toronto Catholic District School Board last May 15th we offered the second History meets Humanity conference for high school students and teachers. Through the day we connected learning the history of WWII in Asia with understanding humanity. Educators and community leaders facilitated engaging workshop sessions, and Joy Kogawa provided all of us with hopeful closing remarks to move forward. A special thank you to all the volunteers who came out to prepare for the conference and assist on the day of!



Here are some comments from the student participants:

"I really liked the engagement in the room to be able to be with other students and know that we are all connected in striving to learn and understanding the past."

"I enjoyed learning more about WWII in Asia because the Grade 10 curriculum doesn't touch on it as much as today did."

"I liked learning about specific atrocities during the second Sino-Japanese war and WWII, that were swept aside (such as Unit 731). I liked this because it is important to understand every aspect of history."

"What I liked about today was hearing different perspectives on history. Everyone's difference of opinion was able to be stated which was interesting to hear. It was very informational and I was able to grasp a lot."

"I will learn from my past so I won't make the same mistakes."

A MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH AMBASSADOR BOARD

I'm Minha Ha; it is a privilege to be serving the Youth Ambassador Board (YAB) as its Chair this year. The members of the YAB are passionate about the vision, the people, the works and the impact of Toronto ALPHA; the purpose of the YAB is to plan, implement and evaluate the ways in which we engage youth on reconciliation, collaboration and social justice. As the YAB continues to establish its roles and processes, I would like to extend an invitation to all young people (including the young-at-heart) to participate in our activities, either as general Youth Ambassadors or as members of the YAB.



YOUTH DIALOGUE ON PEACE



Toronto ALPHA hosted the 7th Youth Dialogue Workshop on March 13, 2013. Tenzing Jigme, Project Manager (Young Canadian Peace Dialogue on China and Tibet) of Mosaic Institute, Saerom Youn, Executive Director of University of Toronto ALPHA Chapter and Randall Baran-Chong, Executive Director of Han Voice Support Association were invited to the panel speakers and presented their work and challenges to over 20 attendees.

The panel discussion was led by Amy Tang, law student of University of Toronto with three valuable questions.

1. How have you contributed to the activism movement on peace building? What were some of the factors that motivated you or drove you to do this?
2. What were some of the challenges you faced or are facing as a youth activist? What are some current barriers to youth engagement?
3. 'Youth Apathy' is an issue that is often times raised in the media. Is this the truth or is it a misconception? What advice would you offer to young people today and how do you envision the peace building movement moving forward?

Despite their different backgrounds and social issues, they are all working towards the same, mutual goals of peace and reconciliation that all in our community should strive for. This dialogue represents a great opportunity for youths to voice their perspectives and turn challenges into opportunities for the future.

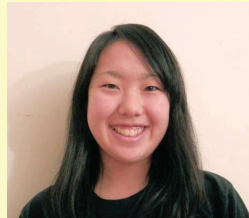
By Judy Cho



OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER & INTERN



Tara Johnson



Haruho Kubota

Hi, my name is **Tara Johnson** and I am the new Education Officer at Canada ALPHA Educational Fund! I am very excited to join this team of wonderful people who share my interest in social justice, peace and reconciliation and education.

I previously worked in the education sector as a teacher both here in Ontario and internationally in Bermuda for 3 years. I graduated with a Bachelor of Honours Arts Degree in Geography with minors in Women's Studies and History from Trent University. I also have a Bachelor of Education Degree from York University.

My role at Canada ALPHA will be to oversee the education related programs including the revision of the Teachers Resource Guide which was published in 2006. In addition, I will be responsible for the development of activities and resources for educators, including presentation material, lesson plans, the study tour and other future educational initiatives.

Hello, my name is **Haruho Kubota** and I will be going on to my last year of undergraduate studies in International Relations and Psychology at Mount Allison University, in Sackville NB. I am an international student from Japan and have found great interest, both personally and academically, in the area of history that Toronto ALPHA explores.

I will be interning at the office this summer to help with the publication process of Tamaki Matsuoka's English version of her book. The tremendous amount of research that Ms. Matsuoka has dedicated towards has been formalized into an enormous collection of testimonials of soldiers and victims from the Nanking Massacre – which is now published in Japanese and Chinese.

This summer, I will work towards getting this project underway. As well, I will be utilizing the resources at the Resource Centre at the office to gather information on the issue of Japanese military sexual slavery during the Second World War for my thesis as an undergraduate student. Through these experiences, I will not only be exposed to various perspectives of Second World War and its aftermaths, but as well as moments of self-discovery and self-reflection. I look forward to spending my summer here in Toronto and working with ALPHA until August.

HumaniTEAM SUMMER PROGRAM

EXPLORE THE PAST, BUILD THE FUTURE!

REGISTRATION OPEN
NOW!

"I learnt that change is possible and there are many others with the same dream of what humanity means."



With a vision of peace and harmony, Toronto ALPHA (Association for Learning and Preserving History of WWII in Asia) is holding a summer program to inspire high school students to reflect on and reach their potential.

Each day will provide an opportunity for youth to build their capabilities as global citizens. Starting from unearthing forgotten history, connections will be made to social justice issues today through film, guest speakers, testimony, games, drama and art. After participating last summer, Kathy reflected that "the information was inspiring and eye-opening I know much more about what is happening around the world, and I feel like I understand the importance of remembering the past now."

Participants will become friends with like-minded peers, meet community leaders, and be mentored by passionate young professionals. With a focus on practical skill building, youth will learn about the past, connect it to the present, and make an action plan for the future.

Date : August 5th to 9th

Time : 10am - 4pm

Place : ALPHA office
85 Scarsdale Road
Suite 305
North York
ON M3B 2R2

Cost : \$100 includes all materials and snacks – bursaries available



For more information and to register (registration deadline: July 15th, 2013)
Email sarah.bleiwas@torontoalpha.org; call 416-299-0111;
or visit: <http://www.torontoalpha.org/index.php/youth/humaniteam>

Congratulations!



Please join us in congratulating the following recipients of **Ontario Volunteer Service Award 2013** for their dedication and contribution to ALPHA's work in the past years. They are the unsung heroes and the striving force behind numerous ALPHA events.

5-YEAR VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Our salute to each one of 'YOU', you are the unsung heroes who never want to come under spotlight but would quietly work till wee hours to think through your meticulous action plans and to make sure mission accomplished, without flaws. Your humbleness has set great examples for us.



Judy Cho



Regina Sit



Larry Lau



Lawrence Yeung



Sunny Wong

YOUTH AWARDS

Good job Ruina and Lily, you both have demonstrated how much a young person can do to make changes and you have also shown us the hope and the fruit of our work. We wish you every success with your studies in university and may your dream of helping others and making this world more 'just' be fulfilled in the near future.



Ruina Bao



Lily Zhang

ALPHA BOARD RETREAT



The annual ALPHA Board Retreat was held on May 22nd at Ryerson University. The objectives of this retreat was the projection of ALPHA's direction.

2013 CANADA ALPHA GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER



It was a wonderful 2nd annual Alpha golf tournament on May 18th. In total we had 32 golfers participating in this year. Thank you golfers, volunteers and sponsors for all your wonderful support.

We look forward to another great event next year and of course to your continued support that helps us make the event amazing!!



LEARN MORE

Evil Men

"What we know about war crimes often comes from survivors. They're often more interested in justice and retribution than root causes. The perpetrators themselves are often not much help in explaining themselves at the time. But author James Dawes thought they should have some insight into how atrocities happen. He put his questions to convicted Japanese war criminals... men who helped unleash terror on China during the 1930s and 40s. They had lots to say. James Dawes wrote about their thoughts in his book: Evil Men."

To hear the radio interview visit: <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2013/06/06/evil-men-james-dawes/>

The Devil's Grin

"The Devil's Grin aims to provide insight into, and information about, the mentality, philosophy, and motivation of the Japanese people, especially the Japanese military, before and during the 1941-1945 war in the Pacific, as well as their system of civilian concentration camps in the Dutch East Indies colony in Southeast Asia. The book also portrays the story of a young Dutch teenage boy developing into an eighteen-year-old man under brutal circumstances as a civilian prisoner of war in Japanese concentration camps in the Dutch East Indies."

To download a free PDF copy visit: <http://www.toniharting.com/>

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

[May 8]

Workshop in "Remembering Forgotten History" with 120 students from Grade 7 to 12 in Peel District School Board at HJA Brown Education Centre in Mississauga.

[Apr 5]

Presentation in "Global humanity perspective in connection with the history of WWII in Asia" with 35 teacher candidates in Brock University.

[Feb 27]

'Iris Chang – the Rape of Nanking' film screening and discussion with 30 law students in University of Ottawa.

[Feb 15]

TDSB PD Day Workshop in 'Legal Responsibilities of Japan after WWII' for 18 TDSB teachers in University of Toronto.

[Jan 17]

Workshop on 'Women and War' as part of the Toronto Public Library Thought Exchange Program in Leaside Library, Toronto.

REQUEST A PRESENTATION

Presentations can be scheduled for educational institutions, organizations or communities. The time length of the presentation can be adjusted according to your specific requests. All the presentations include a Q & A section.

To request a presentation, please e-mail to info@torontoalpha.org or call 416-299-0111 for more details.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Are you an avid reader? Student or retiree, living in Canada or abroad, TorontoALPHA is calling all those who love reading to volunteer 8-10 hours to review materials for educators, students and the general public. For more detailed information contact volunteer@torontoalpha

CALL FOR TESTIMONIALS

Are you a survivor of World War II in Asia? Do you have friends or relatives who experienced this war? Eyewitness accounts unite personal experience with history in a way that is extraordinary in power when shared with youth and students. We welcome individuals to meet with us and share their personal testimonies via text or video. For more detailed information contact sarah.bleiwas@torontoalpha.org

Newsletter Contributors: Judy Cho, Flora Chong, Minha Ha, Haruho Kubota, Brian Wong, Judy Yeung and all ALPHA Staff