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For Immediate Release
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Youth Leadership Conference Targets At-Risk A/PI Young Women

San Jose, CA – The eighth annual leadership conference, “**Sister to Sister: A Celebration of Asian/Pacific Islander Women of Tomorrow,**” sponsored by Asian American Recovery Services, Inc. (AARS), will be held on Wednesday, **May 7, 2003**, from 8am – 4pm at the **First Baptist Church** in Santa Clara, 3111 Benton Street.

As the only event of its kind that exists for Asian American and Pacific Islander (A/PI) teenage girls in the San Francisco Bay Area, attendance of over 200 participants is expected from various middle schools and high schools in Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties.

The purpose of the conference is to build self-esteem and empower young Asian American and Pacific Islander (A/PI) women who have been identified in their schools or in their communities to be engaging in “at-risk”/unhealthy behavior, such as substance abuse and gang involvement. The conference provides young women with culturally-specific, leadership skills development opportunities that are not readily available to them. With the knowledge and skills gained, young A/PI women will be enabled to return to their communities as empowered female leaders. By emphasizing the special uniqueness of each participant, the conference will help each to focus on what positive actions they can do in the future and begin to weave their own individual dreams.

In addition, the annual Sister to Sister Award will be presented to Lieu Tran, Program Manager at Catholic Charities – YES of Santa Clara County, in recognition of her exemplary contribution to the A/PI community. This award recognizes an A/PI female for her outstanding efforts and distinguished community service.

This event is free of charge to the participants and is purely a grassroots effort, made possible through widespread community support and sponsorship. The troubled local economy, as well as the Silicon Valley recession has made it virtually impossible to secure a primary or corporate sponsor to underwrite the costs of the conference. AARS staff and youth clients have made ongoing efforts to raise funds required for this important event, including: donations from friends, family, and community members; fund-raisers at local restaurants; a garage sale; and on-line donations solicited through the conference website: www.aars-inc.org/programs/sis2sis.

Since 1985, Asian American Recovery Services, Inc. has been dedicated to decreasing the incidence and impact of substance abuse in the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities of the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. With a fiscal 2002 budget of nearly \$10 million, Asian American Recovery Services, Inc. is the largest community-based organization in the United States providing health and well-being education and substance abuse treatment services targeting Asian and Pacific Islander communities while providing culturally-competent programs. For more information, please contact AARS, Inc. at 1370 Tully Rd., Suite 501 San Jose, CA 95122, or call (408) 271-3900. Please visit: www.aars-inc.org, for further details.

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