

# Long Beach Times NEWSPAPER

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## Domestic Violence in the African American Community Conference: *A Journey to Healing: Finding the Path*, August 3-4, 2009 in Long Beach, California

### From Staff Reports

Each year, millions of women are the victims of domestic violence, and a number of these violent incidents are witnessed by children in the home. Strategies to address the abuse tend to focus on escaping the violence, yet little attention has been devoted to transitioning these victims from being survivors to being healed of the long-term psychological and emotional trauma associated with victimization. The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) will address this topic through its conference, *A Journey to Healing: Finding the Path*, to be convened August 3-4, 2009 in Long Beach, California.

Through a series of panel discussions, workshops, and artistic expressions, IDVAAC will explore the definitions of and the journey to healing with survivors of domestic violence and adults who witnessed domestic violence as children. The conference will highlight the experiences of these individuals, with a focus on how to move forward in the healing process. Featured panelists and performers will include: survivors of domestic violence, adults who witnessed violence as children, domestic violence practitioners, artists, and scholars whose work addresses this issue.

"Historically, conversations about domestic violence have focused on the immediate impact on and needs of battered women: what they experience, how to safely exit an abusive relationship, and how to re-establish themselves as survivors," says Dr. Oliver Williams, IDVAAC Executive Director. "Through this conference, we will be able to give attention to their pathways to recovery and healing in the long-term."



Dr. Oliver Williams

Among the conference presenters are Margaret "Shug" Avery of "The Color Purple," who will provide a provocative dramatic portrayal of healing; Brenda L. Thomas, author of the *Essence* magazine best-selling memoir, *Laying Down My Burdens*; Carolyn M. West, Ph.D., award-winning scholar

specializing in violence in the lives of black women, Gail Garfield, Ph.D., noted researcher with extensive published work addressing violence against Black women, and a host of scholars, practitioners, and advocates. In addition, R&B group Sounds of Blackness will premiere an original song penned specifically for the conference with a video performance with original choreography by Endalyn Taylor of the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

The conference will also include an awards luncheon to recognize outstanding work to address domestic violence across the United States, with presentations by Dr. Oliver Williams on battered women's perspectives on healing; and Mildred Muhammad, Executive Director of *After the Trauma* and former wife of the convicted DC sniper, who will speak about the challenges a battered woman has may face in fighting for the hearts and minds of her children.

For more information about IDVAAC or its upcoming conference, visit [www.idvaac.org](http://www.idvaac.org) online, or call the Long Beach local co-sponsor, Interval House Crisis Centers at 562-594-9492. Interval House was instrumental in hosting this conference in 2007 and IDVAAC is returning this year because of the hospitality extended by our award-winning local domestic violence program and its African American outreach, Creating A Safe Environment (CASE) Interfaith Domestic Violence Project. Interval House considers it a great privilege as part of its 30th Anniversary of service to be able to bring such an auspicious national conference to Long Beach. Local CASE staff are Rev. Mary Walton and Rev. Arnetha Inge, can be reached at [www.thecasepartnership.org](http://www.thecasepartnership.org) or [thecasepartnership@yahoo.com](mailto:thecasepartnership@yahoo.com) (562) 594-9492.

IDVAAC is a pioneering national organization focused on the unique circumstances of African Americans as they face issues related to intimate partner violence, child abuse, elder maltreatment, and community violence. IDVAAC's mission is to enhance society's understanding of and ability to end violence in the African-American community. Within this context, IDVAAC works with families, individuals, and organizations serving the target population; legal and criminal justice systems; faith and community-based organizations; researchers; and policymakers toward building the knowledge base regarding African Americans and domestic violence and to develop strategies to meet the service needs of this population.