

## **Hnub Tshiab Hmong Women Achieving Together**

Story of Transformation: Phetsy, Volunteer Web Designer

Phetsy's work in web design for Hnub Tshiab's, resulted from his participation with his wife in one of our Family Dialogue, a program that brings together spouses, family members, friends, and other relatives to talk about gender dynamics and encourages them to take individual and/or collective action to be a catalyst for social and cultural change to improve the lives of Hmong women and girls. The following excerpt is Phetsy's story of social transformation.

### **Phetsy's Story**

Nine months ago when my wife Bernadette asked me if I wanted to attend a family dialogue meeting I said to her, "You can go by yourself" and being the stubborn person she is, she forced me to go with her. I went. I wasn't expecting a whole lot from the evening, but instead I walked away with a better understanding of gender roles and how to help create that equality that we need. This one event spiraled into more opportunities and connections with people who care about the community and this social issue.

It wasn't until a few months later that I got to work with the board members. When I heard about how they wanted to have a better website but did not have the resources, I volunteered to take the lead on this project. My background skills are that of a Software Test Engineer and web designing is totally a new field for me. But needless to say, I wanted Hnub Tshiab to have an interactive website, one that they could be proud of and be able to highlight all of their programs and activities.

For 2-3 hours after work and most of my weekends, I was dedicated to the website. Over the course of the three months, working on the website has brought me closer to my sister, mother, and father. It's given me a better outlook on life, has brought engagement within my family and has connected me to my Hmong heritage. Prior to that, my perspective on life was narrowed minded and I lacked involvement in my community. In addition to learning about gender and equity issues, I've also learned more about the organization's mission and vision. Being exposed to these issues, I have been empowered to better support my wife and make better decisions.

To this day, I still continue to maintain our website. And yes, I said "OUR". I've found a place where I belong and hopefully where my legacy could live on to show other Hmong men how they can help improve our community.