

ACRS NEWS



WALK FOR RICE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Saturday, June 27 | 8 a.m. – noon

DEAR FRIENDS,

Hip hop moves for seniors. Tai chi. Yoga. Meditation. Modern and traditional dance. Healing artwork that reveals the beauty of the human spirit. Gardens tended with loving care. Nutritious, delicious, locally grown and organic ingredients for comfort foods that remind us of home, wherever in the world that may be. Young men creating cutting edge films that make a difference. Young women becoming leaders and working to end violence through healthy relationships. Determined job seekers learning skills and overcoming barriers to employment. Citizenship classes for dreamers of all ages. Counseling and treatment for mental health and recovery from addictions. Community organizing and civic engagement for a better future.

This is just a snapshot of the many life affirming, life improving, and life-saving features and activities at ACRS, a place where we come together to share each other's lives, languages and gifts; a place where we celebrate our cultures and build our community.

ACRS is a busy crossroads, where people from humble backgrounds may meet White House staff, and share experiences and insights that could help drive policy on the issues that matter. Community leaders may discuss issues of concern with a U.S. Senator. People of all backgrounds may participate in a town hall with the mayor, or board a bus to Olympia to join community members from all over the state to hear from our governor and speak with our legislators.

Our mission includes the commitment to social justice that birthed ACRS and permeates the broad range of culturally competent and linguistically accessible behavioral health and social services we now provide.

Our food bank is one such service, providing the rice and familiar staples our most vulnerable community members need to survive. These culturally relevant foods are made possible by *Walk for Rice*, created twenty-five years ago by Herb and Bertha Tsuchiya and Sam Mitsui, three community leaders whose sense of community included the most humble to the most exalted. True to their convictions and to ACRS' mission, they created a life affirming, life improving, and life-saving event which strengthens and celebrates our community, because we are all in it together. I hope you will come on June 27 to share your lives and gifts while celebrating and walking with us at the 25th annual *Walk for Rice*, because every life, and every grain counts! ■

With deep appreciation for all that you do for our community,



Diane Narasaki
Executive Director



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Asian Counseling and Referral Service is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization providing behavioral health and social services to Asian American and Pacific Islanders in King County and throughout Washington state.

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WALK FOR RICE TURNS 25 by Dean Wong



ACRS Executive Director Diane Narasaki leading the Walk with then elected officials King County Executive Ron Sims and Seattle's Mayor Paul Schell and City Councilmember Martha Choe. Also pictured are King County Councilmember Larry Gossett and State Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos.

It's 7 a.m. in the Chinatown International District and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) seniors are lining up on King Street to be first in line at the ACRS Food Bank. They come bundled in warm clothes with shopping carts dragging behind them.

When the food bank staff and volunteers arrive for work, clients watch as they move 50 pound bags of rice up the ramp and inside the tiny construction trailer that is home to the second busiest food bank in Seattle.

On a typical distribution day, the counter inside the food bank is covered with packages of dried noodles, vegetables, canned goods and bags filled with rice. Paper grocery bags line the floor in rows along the wall, ready to hand out.

The mission of the ACRS Food Bank is simple and basic to the core: provide food to those in need. Fight hunger in the AAPI community. ACRS distributed 969,801 pounds of food in 2014. 5,665 clients visited the food bank 120,526 times over the course of the year. On each visit, clients eagerly accept what they can get. 75% of the ACRS Food Bank and Emergency Feeding program

clients are children under the age of 18 or seniors over the age of 65. In recent years, more homeless people have signed up for services. Sometimes they walk in off the street to ask for something to eat. Homeless women living under the I-5 freeway are now part of the mix. Food bank staff try to accommodate everyone who asks for help.

Providing vital services to the AAPI community is part of ACRS' core mission. Mental health, employment, citizenship, youth programs, counseling for aging adults and families are just a part of what ACRS has been doing since 1973.

The work of ACRS caught Herb Tsuchiya's eye 25 years ago. Tsuchiya considered ACRS an "undiscovered jewel." As impressed as he was, Tsuchiya wanted more people to know that ACRS was a valuable resource they could turn to for help.

Seeing the lines of people outside the ACRS Food Bank concerned Tsuchiya, who joined forces with his wife Bertha and friend Sam Mitsui to raise money to

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| ■ Continued from page 3 |

feed the hungry. "I saw so many elderly, women and children who lacked adequate food," he said. Tsuchiya also noticed some of the food provided was not typical of the Asian diet. "No one donated rice," said Tsuchiya, a retired pharmacist known for his volunteer work. His easy going manner is in balance with his roles in Asian American theatre, community activism and dedication to social issues.

For Herb and Bertha Tsuchiya and Sam Mitsui, rice became their main cause. "In 1990, Herb and I, along with Asian church members gathered at the ACRS office on Jackson Street to determine how we could help raise funds for the ACRS Food Bank. Herb came up with the idea to sponsor a walk to raise the funds. Out of this, "Walk for Rice was born," said Mitsui.

Blaine Methodist Church, along with the Chinese and Japanese Baptist Churches offered to sponsor *Walk for Rice* that year. "Our first *Walk for Rice* started at the Chinese Baptist Church and our 2.5 mile walk was on the pedestrian path on Beacon Avenue," recalled Mitsui, a member of the highly decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II and an accomplished local runner.

As a brand new event, *Walk for Rice* raised \$1,800. Forty-five people signed up for the fundraiser. In 2013, *Walk for Rice* exceeded \$200,000 in donations for the first time. The 2014 campaign broke that record. "Due to the generosity of sponsors, organizations, walkers and runners, we raised a record \$274,538," said Mitsui. "I'm surprised how much it has grown. It started with three people with one idea and over the years has grown tremendously," said ACRS Food Bank coordinator Karen Jackel, who's been there 23 years.

Walk for Rice has become an annual mission as ACRS staff, its Board of Directors, corporations and community supporters create fundraising teams with names like "Miso Hungry" and "Food Bank Friends." Tsuchiya credits *Walk for Rice* as a channel for their compassion. "It's a community effort to help those in need to put food on the table," Tsuchiya said. His regular fundraising team is CBC Hot Rice.

Tsuchiya has every *Walk for Rice* t-shirt from over the years. Before the t-shirts, there were buttons with the event name printed on them. He has those, too.

One of Tsuchiya's favorite memories was a *Walk for Rice* held one Fourth of July weekend, when the CEO of a refreshment drink company finished first in the run around the Seward Park loop. "The man ran around and won the race. He was so happy," Tsuchiya said. The CEO donated refreshments to the event in following years. Tsuchiya also has fond memories of the year people wore costumes to *Walk for Rice*. They brought their dogs all dressed up too.

Each *Walk for Rice* event is like a celebration to help the ACRS Food Bank. Even during the years when it rained, crowds still gathered for the taiko drummers, Chinese Community Girls Drill Team and the walk or run around Seward Park.

The success of *Walk for Rice* is matched by the need for it. Throughout the years, twenty-one community organizations and churches around Seattle distribute meals and food through ACRS sponsored nutrition programs.

On this 25th anniversary of *Walk for Rice*, ACRS is pleased and humbled by the opportunity to honor Uwajimaya for years of generous contributions to our food bank. The ACRS Food Bank is known for being a special place because of the culturally appropriate, familiar and nutritious foods we are able to provide to the most vulnerable in our community, and Uwajimaya makes this possible. "People like Sam, Herb and the late Bertha with many others, selflessly support many important projects and programs such as ACRS' *Walk for Rice*, that makes us all proud to be part of our community," said Tomio Moriguchi, Chairman of the Board of Uwajimaya Inc.

"It's a great cause, fighting hunger. See you at *Walk for Rice*," Tsuchiya said. *Walk for Rice* is on June 27, 2015 at Seward Park. ■

Visit www.walkforrice.org for details.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2015

MULTIPLY YOUR DOLLARS!

CENTURYLINK MATCH DAYS ARE COMING...STAY TUNED.



WALK FOR RICE

every grain counts



CELEBRATE 25 YEARS

8a.m. - NOON | SEWARD PARK | 2.5 MILE WALK/RUN

REGISTER NOW!

 walkforrice.org

BENEFITING THE ACRS FOOD BANK



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1 The first *Walk for Rice* launched from the Chinese Baptist Church on Beacon Hill and remains an all-ages event. Goofiness welcome!
 2 Sushi the dog is a *Walk for Rice* regular, along with owner Lynn Miyachi.
 3 Executive Director Beth Takekawa (center) of the Wing Luke Museum showing pride with the Wing Luke Walkers.
 4 Team mascots getting friendly. 5 Former King County Executive Ron Sims with ACRS Food Bank coordinator Karen Jackel (left) and volunteer Leilani Rodriguez. 6 *Walk for Rice* co-founder Sam Mitsui cheering on runners and walkers. 7 Former Seattle City Councilmember Cheryl Chow receiving an exuberant welcome from the Seattle Chinese Community Girls Drill Team. She was also a former team mascot and played many roles on the team as a child. 8 State Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos enjoying the *Walk for Rice*. 9 Former State Representative Kip Tokuda and Gene Kanamori. 10 Former ACRS staffer Michael Mathewson showing that creativity and color coordination counts. 11 *Walk for Rice* co-founders Herb and Bertha Tsuchiya. 12 KING 5 News anchor and former ACRS Board Member Lori Matsukawa with ACRS Executive Director Diane Narasaki and incoming Deputy Director Elisa Del Rosario. 13 Seattle Kokon Taiko drummer providing a powerful beat. 14 Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple monks take part in a *Walk for Rice* along Alki Beach.

JOIN THE CLUB!

Club Bamboo Expands: More Than Just a Hot Meal for AAPI Seniors



Instructor Che Sehyun leading yoga class.

At the beginning of 2015, Club Bamboo evolved into a full service center for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) seniors. What began as a senior congregate meal program operating four days a week has transformed into a comprehensive center open for membership and with expanded hours. Come join us between 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m., Monday through Friday, courtesy of a grant from the City of Seattle Human Services Department.

Now for a \$10 annual membership, people 50 or older regardless of income will have access to a full schedule of classes including cooking and art classes, yogalates, Tai Chi, Qi-Gong and even line dancing! We will also provide transportation support, hair and nail services, and health and wellness workshops. Don't worry, seniors 60 and older can still enjoy a delicious and healthy ethnic lunch for just \$2.50.

April Eng has been involved with Club Bamboo for three years. She started as a participant, but began volunteering as a cashier a year ago and frequents the site regularly.

She's now a member of Club Bamboo and shares her excitement with others about the recent addition of beauty services. Seniors can sign up for a haircut or to have their nails done. These services are included with membership. April was among the first to have her hair trimmed by the volunteer hair stylist.

"Now it seems like there's something for everyone," said April. "Health and beauty services, camaraderie... more and more is happening and it's all a real benefit to seniors."

April has a point about the camaraderie coming along with the changes. AAPI seniors are the second most likely racial group to be poor within King County. Limited transportation options and English-speaking abilities can hinder AAPI older adults from accessing services, creating added barriers that are linked to social and linguistic isolation. One of the unexpected benefits of Club Bamboo's new activity schedule is that it has enabled the seniors to step out of their comfort zone and make new friends.



Club Bamboo

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Activities are held in ACRS's Safeco Activity Center

"These services and activities have made it so we can bridge the gap between English and non-English speakers," said April. Activities like line and ballroom dancing are easy for all to participate in, without feeling pressure to speak the same language. Irei Setsuko has been coming to Club Bamboo for over a year. Before the expansion of services, she would attend three, maybe four days a week. Now she routinely comes Monday through Friday to participate in activities and spend time with her new friends. "I love it so much. The people and staff are nice. Every day makes happiness," said Irei.

What do the seniors want to see next? "Karaoke!" a group of Club Bamboo members declared. "The more you offer, the more we like," one said with a smile.

Mark your calendars for our grand opening on May 28 at 3639 Martin Luther King Jr. Way S and learn what Club Bamboo has to offer! Please RSVP to Miguel Saldin at (206) 695-7510 by May 21. Seating is limited. ■



Participants must be at least 50 years of age. Until May 27, membership fees will be waived for new enrollees. Participants may register in person, by mail or contact Senior Center coordinator Tracee Lee at traceel@acrs.org or (206) 774-2440.

Mondays

Yoga	10:00 ^{am} – 11:00 ^{am}
Ballroom Dance	11:00 ^{am} – 12:00 ^{pm}
Lunch	12:00 ^{pm} – 1:00 ^{pm}
Table Tennis & Open Activity	1:00 ^{pm} – 3:00 ^{pm}

Tuesdays

Tai Chi	10:00 ^{am} – 11:00 ^{am}
Ballroom Dance	11:00 ^{am} – 12:00 ^{pm}
Lunch	12:00 ^{pm} – 1:00 ^{pm}
Yogalates (yoga + pilates)	1:00 ^{pm} – 2:00 ^{pm}

Wednesdays

Wellness & Exercise	10:00 ^{am} – 11:00 ^{am}
Line Dance	11:00 ^{am} – 12:00 ^{pm}
Lunch	12:00 ^{pm} – 1:00 ^{pm}
Qi- Gong	1:00 ^{pm} – 2:00 ^{pm}

Thursdays

Beginning Dance	10:00 ^{am} – 10:30 ^{am}
Stick Exercise	10:30 ^{am} – 11:00 ^{am}
Open Dance	11:00 ^{am} – 12:00 ^{pm}
Lunch	12:00 ^{pm} – 1:00 ^{pm}
Line Dance	1:30 ^{pm} – 2:30 ^{pm}

Fridays

Art Class (Room 123)	9:30 ^{am} – 12:00 ^{pm}
Ballroom Dance	10:00 ^{am} – 11:00 ^{am}
Creative Movement	11:00 ^{am} – 12:00 ^{pm}
Lunch	12:00 ^{pm} – 1:00 ^{pm}
Qi- Gong	1:00 ^{pm} – 2:00 ^{pm}

Activities are subject to change.

Please visit www.acrs.org/activities for the current schedule.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING VISITS CLUB BAMBOO

Nora Super, Executive Director of the 2015 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA), observed programs at ACRS before the Seattle Regional Forum along with Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They shared a delightful discussion with members of Club Bamboo on how to promote healthy aging, ensure retirement security and increase access to services needed by seniors. "What a wonderful place! You have truly created a model for others to emulate," said Nora. The Conference acknowledges the importance of key programs like Social Security and Medicare, and looks ahead to issues that will help shape the landscape for older Americans over the next decade. The Seattle Regional Forum was held April 2. ■

Nora Super, center, Kathy Greenlee, left.



by Diksha Rai, Benu Ghimirey,
Tulasa Ghimirey and Dawn Cheung

THROUGH THE EYES OF THEIR YOUTH

Bhutanese Nepali Community Seeks Change



Youth researchers and Dr. Hye-Kyung Kang enjoying sun and fun activities during a retreat in Olympia where they discussed findings from community interviews.

The Lhotsampa (“People of the South”) have been treated as outcasts and a threat to the Bhutanese Government since 1988 because of differing views on culture, religion and tradition. As a result, more than 49,000 Bhutanese refugees have fled persecution in Bhutan to resettle in the United States since 2007. Washington State is currently the seventh largest resettlement area in the country, and nearly 2,000 Bhutanese refugees reside here.

To better understand how ACRS could help meet the mental health and social service needs of this unique population, our Children, Youth and Families (CYF) program partnered with Dr. Hye-Kyung Kang. Hye-Kyung is an associate professor at Smith College’s School for Social Work and is a former ACRS staff member. “I specifically wanted to do a research project that was community-based and participatory since I had become very interested in using research to build community capacity. I knew that ACRS and I shared that goal,” said Dr. Kang.

In that spirit, ACRS program leads engaged 12 Bhutanese Nepali youth from Franklin, Rainier Beach and Foster High Schools as field researchers when the study kicked off in 2014. Their ties to the community and command of the Nepali language made them ideal partners to help foster honesty and engagement with the research project. Prior to the interviews, the group participated in a two-day research training camp where they learned about community-based research and shared ideas about issues their community faced. The group met weekly to share knowledge about their community and polish their interviewing skills.

In the interviews with the adults and elders in their community, the youth brought to light the many challenges of resettlement. Though the Lhotsampa are ethnically Nepalese and speak Nepali, the people of Nepal and its government do not accept them. They fled persecution in Bhutan only to live as social misfits in Nepal. Those who resettled in Nepal often lacked adequate housing, education, healthcare and even

clean water. Those who subsequently left Nepal and came to the United States only saw their challenges mount. As one interviewee poignantly stated, “It was very hard for me to adapt to the United States because I had no relatives to help, and I didn’t feel like I belonged in this country. I just wanted to go back to Bhutan, but I don’t belong there either.”

Many in the Bhutanese Nepali community are unemployed and suffer from depression because they feel excluded and unqualified for gainful employment. “There is a high standard of living here in the United States compared to Nepal and I do not know how I will succeed here. I feel helpless,” said another interviewee.

Without sufficient resources to support them or knowledge of where to turn for help, the isolation faced by this community contributes to a devastating reality—a high suicide rate.

Youth are enrolled in English classes when they start school in the U.S. Paired with consistent exposure, these classes enable them to learn the language and assimilate more quickly than older family members who lack similar opportunities. As a result, many refugee families depend on their children to help navigate life in a foreign country. Youth often miss school to help their families with translation at various appointments and caring for younger siblings. “[The youth] have only been here for a few years and they have not yet found the resources they need. They are likely to take care of their family, miss school and get bad grades. It really affects their future,” said an interviewee.

This observation is corroborated by youth researcher Nirmala Chuwan’s account. “We know a lot of our classmates who miss up to 2-3 days of school per week just to help their families out. It is not uncommon.” It is clear that in many Bhutanese Nepali families, the need to take care of the family takes priority over education.

As part of the project, the youth researchers presented some ideas to address the needs of their community:

- Improve the awareness of Bhutanese Nepali adults and elders of programs and resources to help them adjust and thrive in the U.S.
- Increase academic support for Bhutanese Nepali youth and offer programs that prepare them to succeed if they pursue post-secondary education.

- Tackle the high rate of depression and suicide within the community by improving awareness and providing access to mental health services to foster open conversation about these culturally taboo subjects.

This youth-led study is just one step towards addressing a very complex situation. As upcoming community leaders, youth engagement is another step toward understanding and meeting the needs of the Bhutanese Nepali community. Through this project, these youth researchers also gained something from the experience: “I would say that ACRS has helped me know myself and my community better. I didn’t know much about Bhutan and the Bhutanese community, or the problems that my community is facing before participating in this program,” said youth researcher Diksha Rai.

ACRS’ Children, Youth and Families program supports Bhutanese and other immigrant and refugee youth academically with leadership development, counseling and youth job readiness training. To meet community needs where they are, our youth programs are held at ACRS as well as at schools. Our programs also include support for the entire family through home visits. In addition, our behavioral health program opened a Kent office last year to bring counseling and other services closer to the elders of the Burmese and Bhutanese communities.

Tulasa Ghimrey “[hopes] these solutions can help Bhutanese elders, adults and youth feel like they finally have a safe and plentiful place they can finally call home and belong to.” ■

Youth researchers included Tulasa Ghimrey, Nirmala Chuwan, Benu Ghimrey, Diksha Rai, Sujjan Bhandari, Enom Baraily, Nandu Rae, Durga Poudel, Yashoda Khat, Puja Niroula and Yanjana Adhikari. Dawn Cheung and Saul Tran-Cornwall served as ACRS program leads. This research project was made possible by the Okura Mental Health Scholarship for Asian and Pacific Islander Social Workers, which was awarded by the Asian and Pacific Islander Social Work Educators Association to Dr. Hye-Kyung Kang and ACRS’ Children, Youth and Families program.

ACRS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Equipping Job-Seeking Clients for Excellence



Employment students preparing for mock interviews with real employers.

Since 1993, ACRS has been helping immigrants and refugees with limited English language skills and American-born job seekers gain employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency. Our employment team speaks 13 languages and excels at culturally competent case management that provides clients the wrap-around support and resources they need to succeed in what is often their first job in this country. We provide services in our Seattle and Kent offices, and at Highline College and WorkSource sites throughout King County.

We work with employers to understand their hiring needs, and prepare clients by helping them:

- Develop a personal employment plan
- Write resumes and cover letters, conduct and submit on-line job searches and applications, and complete mock job interviews
- Pursue job leads, schedule and get to job interviews
- Learn vocational English as a second language (VESL) and industry-specific job skills to prepare for hospitality jobs or earn certificates in Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10 (OSHA), cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and food handling
- Attend year-long certificate programs at community and technical colleges to gain other occupational skills
- Improve computer skills
- Increase employment prospects by attending weekly Job Club and Job Readiness workshops
- Retain their jobs on a long-term basis through ongoing support and case management

ACRS employment case managers are familiar with hiring partners, and equip clients to succeed in their jobs through industry-specific trainings and certifications. We also cultivate strong relationships with employers in a wide array of industries across King County, including manufacturing, health care, hospitality and retail. This enables us to help our clients find jobs in industries where they want to work or where they have work experience, and it allows us to find clients jobs in alternative industries when a particular industry might not be hiring.

Clients from the 2013-2014 Workforce Investment Act contract earned an average of \$14/hour at the time of hire versus the Washington State minimum wage of \$9.47/hour.

In our most recent two-week VESL class, half of the 16 clients that attended the entire session were offered a job or hired by hospitality and building maintenance employers who came to ACRS to interview clients on the last day of class. ■

Find out how we can help you!



Seattle-King County jobseekers are invited to attend an orientation, held every Tuesday at 3 p.m. To make an appointment, call Employment Services supervisor Yong Lim at (206) 695-7590 or email employmentprogram@acrs.org.

Special thanks to ABM, Boeing, Genie Industries and The Westin Bellevue for their partnership with the ACRS Employment program.

ACRS OFFERING FREE CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION WORKSHOPS

The ACRS Citizenship program is pleased to announce a series of free workshops providing N-400 application assistance at libraries throughout King County this summer and fall. Clients will be able to meet one on one with ACRS staff and work together to apply for naturalization. These workshops are made possible through a continued partnership with the King County Library System and funding from the New Americans Campaign. ■



Service is free, but space is limited. Make an appointment by contacting Jennifer Rosacker at (206) 774-2440 or Upama KC at (206) 805-8945.

Reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities is available. Please contact the library prior to the event if you require accommodation.

Special thanks to:



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Upcoming Workshops

Thursday, May 28, 4-7pm

Des Moines Library
21620 11th Avenue S
Des Moines, WA 98198
(206) 824-6066

Friday, June 26, 11am-3pm

Kent Library
212 2nd Avenue N
Kent, WA 98032
(253) 859-3330

Monday, July 27, 4-7pm

Federal Way Library
34200 1st Way S
Federal Way, WA 98003
(253) 839-0257

SHARING STORIES THROUGH FILM *by Eric You*

ACRS Film Group Helps Southeast Asian Young Men Find Their Voice



Eric You at the Seattle Asian American Film Festival on a panel discussing his experience making his film.

I got involved in the Southeast Asian Young Men's Group (SEA-YM) sophomore year after my friend invited me to join the group. He told me that there was free food, that we got to skip class once a week and that all of our friends were there. I didn't care much about high school so it was pretty tempting. After joining, I learned more about Southeast Asian culture. It interested me because it was stuff that I didn't learn in class and my parents didn't talk about. It was easy to get along with the people I didn't know in group. They were like me. We were all Southeast Asian and we had a shared history.

At first, I joined group to get my service learning hours and to have something to put on my resume. Joseph Mills, the SEA-YM group lead, gave everybody an assignment to ask our parents about their story, and find out where and how they grew up. I didn't feel like doing it because it was uncomfortable to talk to my parents about their past and the Khmer Rouge. They often talked about how easy I have it here and how they want me to have better opportunities in life, but they never talked about their past.

However, I needed service hours, so I thought I might make a film about my cultural background with the SEA-YM afterschool film program. Joseph loved the idea and tried to teach me as much as he could about filmmaking. This coincided with my family's trip to Cambodia, and so I took advantage of this trip to film, and get to know my parents and family better.

I went to Cambodia with my parents in my junior year. I was excited to go because of everything I had learned with my group. I was only five the first time I visited, so I didn't get very much out of it then. This time, I wanted to get to know my family and find out more about my culture, and feel connected to it.

Interviewing my dad for my video project felt different than other times when we have talked.

I was able to ask him questions that I wouldn't have before I joined group. I learned how my father gave up on his dream to become a doctor so my family and I could have better opportunities. Hearing his story made me more appreciative of his sacrifices. Since then, I began helping out more around the house and interacting with my parents more. In the end, this film was more for me than anyone else. Though it was hard work to shoot and edit while balancing schoolwork, learning about my heritage and getting past the barriers between my dad and me made it worth the effort.

Joseph submitted my film for inclusion in a local film festival. I was happy when my film was accepted and I was amazed that something I made, my story, became such a big deal. ■

Eric continues to attend the Southeast Asian Young Men's group weekly. His short film, "My Father's Cambodia," appeared in the February 2015 Seattle Asian American Film Festival. Four new films from group members like Eric premiered in April: "Chanthadeth", "Model Minority Stereotype," "Why I Don't Smoke" and "Across the Mekong," a film about Lao bicultural identity and the refugee experience.

The Southeast Asian Young Men's Group (SEA-YM) is provided through ACRS' Children, Youth and Families program. ACRS staff started the program to assist Southeast Asian young men achieve academic success and learn healthy decision-making skills. As high school students, Southeast Asian male teens are at an especially high risk for dropping out and getting involved in gang activity. SEA-YM meets weekly to help these high school students develop channels of communications both with themselves, their peers and their families by providing them with a creative outlet to tell their stories through documentary filmmaking.



1 The Seattle Asian American Film Festival (SAAFF) took place in February 2015 and featured two short films by SEA-YM participants: "My Father's Cambodia" and "A Clean UA." 2 A scene from "My Father's Cambodia." 3 SEA-YM participants pose for a photo with ACRS staff at SAAFF.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE DAY by Mario Teulilo Making Our Voices Heard



OCEAN youth presented Governor Jay Inslee with a tapa cloth lei. Tapa cloth represents community, because it requires every hand in the community to make it.

Photo courtesy of the Governor's office.

Asian Pacific American (APA) Legislative Day is an opportunity for our communities to voice our concerns to state legislators. On February 26, ACRS and our partners across Washington comprising the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) participated in this year's APA Legislative Day. Enhancing the ability of community members of all ages to advocate for themselves, their families and their communities is a core part of ACRS' mission.

I was lucky to lead youth participants with ACRS' OCEAN (Oceanic Communities Educate Across Neighborhoods) group, a prevention program for Pacific Islander youth using music, song and dance to engage and encourage them to make the right choices in life. Pacific Islanders face disparities similar to all people of color. Yet, there are issues that are unique to them, including barriers towards citizenship and the threat of rising sea levels to their countries of origin. Pacific Islander and refugee youth have the state's highest drop-out rates, mainly due to lack of cultural competency in our kids' education. School data for Asians and Pacific Islanders must be disaggregated for a better understanding of the issues at stake.

Pacific Islanders also have great cultural and ethnic diversity. Pacific Islander youths' experiences vary depending on where they were born, and when and how old they were when they immigrated. OCEAN provides a forum for these youth to come together, share stories and learn from each other.

For APA Legislative Day, we joined almost 1,700 AAPIs who boarded thirty buses to Olympia. OCEAN youth spoke with legislators about the need to distinguish between the Asian and Pacific Islander communities. We highlighted the disproportionate impacts of climate change on disadvantaged communities here and in our home countries. We also noted that state budget cuts have had devastating effects on seniors, college students, low-wage workers, and people with disabilities, mental illness and substance use disorders. Our government must act now to reduce carbon emissions, and reinvest in human services, education and the environment.

OCEAN's participation in APA Legislative Day honors the importance of civic engagement and helping to shape the future of our community. ■

AGING AS ROLE REVERSAL by Ling Chua, LMFT



THERAPY ASSOCIATES

Witnessing the decline in our parents' health as they age is never easy. It can be particularly stressful for Asian Americans born to immigrant parents. These adult children who take on the responsibility of caring for their aging parents themselves in the name of filial piety and family togetherness may have their parents move in with them to facilitate care. They not only look after their parents, but may also assume decision making responsibilities on issues ranging from diet to finances. In cultures where family hierarchy is based on seniority, such role reversals can cause tension in the family.

In my clinical work, I come across adult children struggling with multiple caregiving roles in households. Between ensuring the safety of their parents at home and taking them to doctors' appointments, these children still have to keep up with raising their own kids. Placing their parents in an assisted living facility or hiring a home care aide is never an option, because they fear being viewed by their community as shirking their responsibilities at best, and abandoning their parents at worst.

After all, if our parents braved hardships to come to a foreign land so their children could have a better future, how can we walk away in their greatest time of need?

As a result of the constantly competing demands stemming from our various roles, we as adult children often experience frustration, resentment and guilt. Well-intentioned advice from siblings may be met with outbursts like "you try living with dad!" With both parents around the house, we may also see more of their marital conflicts and feel pressured to take sides. We may see how unhappy our parents are, having never really been integrated into the American community because of a language barrier, cultural stoicism, or lack of comfort with people from other cultures. We may even realize our parents have been suffering from depression or other mental health issues.

Contrary to the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans fall short in health during old age when compared with other ethnic groups. When exacerbated by barriers to care, this can present serious problems to their physical and mental well-being. For example, according to a *New York Times* report in 2014, Asian American and Pacific Islander women over 75 are almost twice as likely as other women the same age to commit suicide.

We need to speak openly and honestly with our parents if we have concerns about their health. Some adult children try unsuccessfully to get counseling for their elderly parents, unable to overcome their denial and stigma of mental health issues. Some find it helpful to use words such as helpers instead of counselors or psychiatrists. "Perhaps chatting with someone may help" is also a good way of introducing the subject of counseling. Explain that you want to help them be happier but you do not know how, and that you do know someone who may be able to listen to their grievances and help them sort things out.

Seek help from another family member or trusted friend if meeting the daily needs of parents becomes a struggle. Help your parents understand that on certain days you may have other matters to attend to, but that they can call you if they need to. Plan for respites so that you can still spend some time doing the things you have always enjoyed. If your parents are physically able, have them come along on errands such as grocery shopping and let them help with simple chores. Chat with them about work, your kids, and seek their advice from time to time by asking "what would you do?" Your parents will be happy to know they can still take care of you in little ways. ■



Community workshops and individual or family counseling appointments are available. For more information or to schedule a consultation, please call ACRS Therapy Associates at (206) 695-7511.

Ling is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with ACRS Therapy Associates.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: TERRENCE CABAIO



Terrence Cabaio currently works at ACRS as one of our human resources specialists.

With approximately 800 volunteers a year, ACRS remains a community based organization with volunteers at the core of achieving our mission. The very foundation of ACRS was built by people who went above and beyond what was asked of them to create lasting, positive change. ACRS' rich history of volunteer support continues to thrive with the talent and time of invested community members.

Terrence Cabaio is one of the latest additions to our story.

Fully-dedicated from the start, Terrence interned 20 hours a week with ACRS' development department for six months last year. In that time, Terrence provided crucial support for two major fundraising events: *Walk for Rice* and our Annual Gala. He created budget tools, procured auction items and generously provided support wherever needed.

Terrence increased our capacity and helped us put on record-breaking fundraisers. He also helped lead our internal United Way fundraising effort.

On top of his ACRS service, Terrence balanced graduate school and was active in the Army ROTC. There is no questioning his commitment, or his talent for succeeding under pressure. Terrence distinguished himself through displays of leadership and teamwork and received the ACRS Volunteer of the Month award.

Recently, he joined the ACRS staff and is just one of several volunteers over the years who have found a home on staff with us. With his great attitude and inspiring ambition, Terrence will continue to make ACRS and the community a brighter place. ■



Volunteer and make a difference in our community! Visit acrs.org/volunteering or contact John Malcomson at volunteer@acrs.org or (206) 695-7637 for more information.

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