

ACRS NEWS



DIVERSITY MAKES OUR
COUNTRY BEAUTIFUL



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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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DEAR FRIENDS,



We are living in complex and rapidly changing times with changes that can be overwhelming, no matter where we fall on the political spectrum. A minority of Americans call for a return to what may seem to them a simpler time, a time when white Americans were a very dominant majority of the country and expected to always be the dominant majority. They revere the past, demand respect for their traditions and object to the growing racial, cultural and religious diversification of our population. They fear refugee admissions and immigration as threats to their dominance.

A majority of Americans recognize that with the exception of the indigenous people of this land, our nation is a nation of people who came from other parts of the world, whether voluntarily or through forced migration and slavery. They support immigration and continuing to provide a safe haven

for refugees fleeing violence in their homelands. Many welcome the growing diversification of our population as a source of strength, rather than a weakness. Many believe that traditions which glorify a past based on the genocidal assaults on and broken treaties with indigenous people, the enslavement of Africans and their descendants, the exclusion and mass incarceration of Asians, the seizure of the Hawaiian islands and nuclear testing in the homelands of Pacific Islanders, and the labor exploitation of people from Latin America, are not traditions which should be honored and continued into the future. They welcome a future in which our country is shared by all races and cultures, rather than dominated by one.

This is what the immigration debate is about: who we are as a country, and who we want to be. The majority of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community is clear that we want our nation to be one that welcomes immigrants and refugees and respects the racial, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity they bring. We want our country to live up to our highest ideals, a country of liberty and justice for all.

ACRS was built on these beliefs. We grew out of the social justice movement, and have never lost sight of our beginnings and our community's historical experience in this country. Our mission and vision as an organization is based on these beliefs, as are our services, advocacy and civic engagement activities. We know that change is inevitable; the question is not whether there will be change, but whether we will be agents of change, or passive victims of change. Nearly 45 years ago our founders decided that ACRS would be an agent of change at every level. ACRS provides life-saving and enhancing services to individuals, systems advocacy for our community, and civic engagement opportunities to promote our community's participation in our democracy. In this newsletter, you will see stories of individual courage, collective compassion and empowerment, of advocacy to improve conditions in our community, and of civic engagement to strengthen our community and our democracy. Thank you for the support you give us to make it all possible. ■

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

Diane Narasaki
Executive Director

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LEARNING TO LOVE HERSELF AGAIN



Neta is optimistic for what her future holds.

Photo by Ramon Dompur.

My family had no idea of the double-life that I lived. I was in fear of them finding out the truth, that I was homeless and drugged out. But they knew something was wrong, because I wasn't the same person they knew. I was in denial. But deep, deep down, I was screaming for help. I needed to get out of the lifestyle I was in. For nearly a year, my world consisted of sleeping on the streets, sleeping in women's shelters, and waking up to find my next hit. I had no idea I was dealing with depression and anxiety. I felt stuck in my way of thinking.

One day, Neta decided to steal a plane ticket to New York from the travel agency that she had been working at. With only \$200 in her pockets and finding herself in a city where she knew no one, she landed on the streets, where she engaged in drinking, using drugs and prostitution to fuel her lifestyle.

When she got word that her parents were separating, she decided to return to Seattle to care for her mother. But she needed to care for herself, first. Soon after her

return, Neta went back to living on the streets, where she met someone who referred her to ACRS.

"When I first met Neta, it was hard to connect with her. Most of the time, I felt like either Neta was high, or Neta was not all there," says her case manager, Polu, who shared that one of their first interactions was over the phone, while Neta was being hospitalized for a breakdown. "Neta was yelling out to the nurses, 'I want this' and 'I want that,' and 'if you don't do it, I'm going to go jump off the bridge and go kill myself.'" Polu was able to calm Neta down by reminding her of their shared Samoan values of humility and respect. Over time, Neta's monthly meetings with Polu provided her with the support she needed to rebuild her life. With Polu's help, Neta took things one step at a time toward her recovery and healing.

As her case manager, Polu connected Neta with our psychiatric medical team to get the immediate care that she needed. Later, they worked with our housing

▪ *Continues on page 26* |

NATIONAL CONVERSATIONS IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY

With each passing day, many of us find ourselves asking what the standard for the “new normal” is. But just when we get to a point where we think a line has been established, it inevitably gets crossed. The steady stream of heated rhetoric and controversial tweets make many of us want to tune it all out, change the channel, turn off the radio, or unfollow some of our friends on Facebook. At ACRS, we’ve spent almost four and a half decades keeping an eye on, participating in, and leading hard conversations that are taking place here in Seattle and all the way to the other Washington.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander experience here in the United States has historically been one of exclusion and invisibility, from overt policies and legislation like the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to more subtle forms like the raging national debate on DACA and immigration ignoring the fact that Asia sends more immigrants to our country now than does any other region of the world. People from our countries of origin endure some of the longest backlogs in immigration processing, which keeps families apart and puts dreams on hold. Based on the latest available

data, the Center for Migration Studies estimates that there were more than 1.7 million undocumented AAPIs in our country as of 2015.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, over 1.9 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders across the country “gained access to new options for health care coverage” since the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), better known as Obamacare. Washington State’s decision to participate in the ACA’s Medicaid expansion meant that in 2016 alone, over 18,000 AAPIs here were able to gain health care coverage, based on data from the state’s Office of Financial Management.

The battle to repeal and replace the ACA took center-stage for a large part of 2017, but was defeated by razor thin margins each time it got close. These defeats were temporary victories for millions of people, including AAPIs currently receiving health care coverage through Obamacare as Congress turned its attention to the national budget and tax reform.

Our broken immigration system keeps families apart and puts dreams on hold.

Photo by Dean Wong.



The National Budget

In May 2017, President Trump issued a budget that outlined his plans for the nation for 2018 and the decade beyond. In early October, the House of Representatives and the Senate released their own budget proposals. All three share two key features: 1) tax cuts and 2) budget cuts.

In its analysis of the tax framework that the White House and House and Senate Republicans unveiled in late September, the Tax Policy Center concluded that “those with the very highest incomes would receive the biggest tax cuts...about 80 percent of the total benefit would accrue to taxpayers in the top 1 percent.” The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) goes a step further to point out that the “bottom 80 percent of Americans [those making less than about \$150,000] would receive just 13 percent of the benefits.”

CBPP published an analysis in mid-October concluding that although they “[differ] in detail, the three plans are broadly similar.” Here are the key features highlighted in their report that directly impact ACRS and the communities we serve:

Deep cuts in non-defense appropriations. K-12 education, infrastructure, medical and scientific research, environmental protection, low-income housing, national parks and a myriad of other services.

Very deep cuts in health care. Each plan would trim Medicaid, Medicare and the ACA’s subsidies for health insurance and health-related programs between \$1.8 to \$2 trillion. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that this would cause millions of people to lose health coverage, raise premiums and weaken coverage, and ultimately contribute to the collapse of the health insurance exchanges set up as part of the ACA.

Deep cuts in other entitlement programs. Each of the plans would take crucial funds away from social programs that support low and middle-income families, seniors and the disabled, including SNAP (formerly food stamps), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and funds for higher education, including Pell Grants and student loans.

ACRS takes a holistic approach to healthcare that includes mental health and primary care services.

Photo by Hong Chhuor.



Millions of people could lose health coverage, see premiums rise and experience weakened coverage.

What's next? As of this writing, a single budget document has yet to emerge, so there is still much to be done before a bill reaches President Trump's desk. CBPP's assessment of the House tax plan released on November 2 was that it was "more of the same," citing that its focus on cutting taxes for corporations and the wealthy would substantially increase the national deficit, which would later be used to justify slashing programs and services that serve working and middle-class families.

The Debate on Immigration

The landscape for U.S. immigration policy has changed significantly since the election of November 2016. There have been many changes – proposed and/or implemented – to our immigration system. President Trump proposed reducing the number of refugees that can resettle in the U.S. each year from a high of over 110,000 in 2016 to 45,000 in 2018. His administration also issued several executive orders barring refugee arrivals and most recently, visitors from certain countries such as Syria and Somalia. Some of the executive orders have been challenged in

court – several by Washington's Attorney General, Bob Ferguson. The impacts are not yet fully understood, except to drastically reduce the numbers of refugee arrivals from majority-Muslim countries over the last several months and possibly into 2018, pending new challenges to the latest travel ban.

In early September, the President announced his decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in six months if Congress does not pass a legislative fix, such as the 2017 DREAM Act. If Congress does not act, 800,000 DACA recipients, with thousands of young adults from Asia and the Pacific Islands among them, could face deportation from the United States, the only country many of them have ever known. Finally, the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy (RAISE) Act was introduced by Republican Senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue in February. If passed, this bill would cut legal immigration to the United States by 50 percent over a decade by limiting who could be given entry under family reunification, eliminating the diversity visa, and giving preference to highly-skilled or educated people.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN: TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH PAID FOR BY EVERYONE ELSE

STEP ONE:



Cut taxes for the rich now, driving up deficits

STEP TWO:



Medicaid/Medicare



Food Assistance



Education



Job Training

Use higher deficits to justify cuts in critical programs for everyone else

For now, there have been no proposed changes to the processes and procedures by which Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) over the age of 18 who have been in the country for at least five years can become U.S. citizens. ACRS' citizenship team works with hundreds of LPRs to become naturalized U.S. citizens each year, and we continue to do so, in one on one settings, through our citizenship classes, and in group application processing workshops at ACRS, and in partnership with other organizations in the community.

The actions taken to restrict immigration and refugee admissions affect not only those who wish to immigrate or seek safe haven here, but also their family members who are already in the U.S. who have waited for long periods, often several years or even decades to reunite in our country. Family-based immigration has affected the Asian American and Pacific Islander community more than any other community in the United States.

ACRS will continue to help reunite families through our citizenship and immigration services and our advocacy, locally and nationally to defend family-based immigration. We oppose the RAISE Act and the Islamophobic executive orders known as the Muslim travel bans.

You Can Help by Joining the Conversation

As we have always done for almost four and a half decades, ACRS and our community partners are taking part in the ongoing debates on health care, funding for programs, immigration and more. We are organizing so that we'll be ready to tackle the threats to our community and protect the most vulnerable among us. ACRS stands with DACA recipients, and urges Congress to pass a clean 2017 DREAM Act by the end of the year.

Your voice matters. Please call the Congressional Hotline at (202) 224-3121 to let your representatives and senators know how you feel about these critical issues and how the proposals and actions on immigration and the budget impact our community.

We invite you to join us! Please sign-up for our email list to receive alerts and information about how you can get involved. Get in touch with us at info@acrs.org for more information and follow us on Facebook and Twitter. ■



Photo by Dean Wong.

AN UPDATE ON THE ACRS AAPI DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are the fastest growing racial group, locally and nationally. AAPIs are the largest racial minority and immigrant and refugee population in Greater Seattle and King County and are approximately 10% of the state's population. Yet, our communities are still invisible on many important issues, including immigration, Islamophobia and the RAISE Act.

Did you know that 1 in 7 AAPIs are undocumented? They comprise about one-quarter of those who are undocumented in Washington State. 90% of AAPIs are immigrants, refugees, or children of immigrants and refugees. AAPIs account for more than 40% of all annual immigration to the United States. In short, U.S. immigration policy and legislation deeply affect AAPIs and their families and communities.

**How do we make our AAPI voices heard?
How do we bring visibility to the issues
most important to our communities?**

This past October, ACRS worked with community partners to bring attention to these issues, mobilizing leaders and community members as part of the AAPI National Week of Action on Immigration. Along with over 30 community organizations across the country, we delivered a unified statement that AAPIs care about justice for our communities. On the morning of October 9, about 350 people from across the state came to ACRS to stand together for immigrants and refugees, for Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) participants, and for a clean DREAM Act. Joining community members from King County, people traveled from as far away as Spokane and Yakima, and from Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston Counties. The rally hosted participants from many communities including South Asian: Indian, Bhutanese and Nepalese; Southeast Asian:

Volunteers call voters to remind them that their voice counts and to remember to complete and send in their ballots.

Photo by Hyunchul Luke Jung



Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Khmu, Hmong, Mien and Thai; Pacific Islanders: Samoan and Hawaiian; as well as Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Filipino.

Speakers included U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal, WA State Representatives Sharon Tomiko Santos and Mia Gregerson; the King County Executive, City of Seattle Deputy Mayor, representatives of the Governor as well as community leaders and representatives from across the state. We were fortunate to hear from a Korean DACA recipient who shared her story. The speakers addressed DACA, the 2017 Dream Act, the Muslim travel ban, RAISE Act and President Trump's latest immigration policy principles. Rally participants heard from leaders speaking with one voice on these issues.

While this event was important for its content – in sharing information, in hearing from elected officials and community leaders, and in hearing

the personal story from a DACA recipient, it was equally significant in giving visibility to our AAPI community's capacity to mobilize and come together to give voice to our concerns.

The ACRS AAPI Democracy Initiative works to lift the voices of AAPIs through a continuum of strategies including voter engagement. We joined others in two non-partisan Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaigns for the recent general election. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, ACRS is non-partisan and may not support or oppose a candidate for public office. However, we can conduct voter and civic education and encourage people to vote.

We are so grateful for the many volunteers who have given their time in reaching out to communities and reminding them to vote, especially through our evening phone banks. Community members, ACRS board members and students made calls in multiple languages to remind people to vote by election day, help them with replacement ballots, or locate the

Rally participants gathered at ACRS during the recent AAPI National Week of Action.

Photo by Dean Wong.





A Korean elder votes at a local ballot party organized by ACRS.

Photo by Hong Chhuor.

nearest official ballot drop box. We collaborated with community partners on non-partisan voter education through candidate forums to provide opportunities for communities and candidates to hear from each other. We worked with partners including the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition and School's Out WA to host the Seattle Candidate Forum on Education. Our work was made possible with funding support from The Seattle Foundation and King County Elections.

We collaborated with many of our sister organizations and other partners including the Indian Association of Western Washington, APACEvotes, InterIm CDA, Chinese Information Service Center and International Community Health Services on the Eastside API Candidate Forum in Bellevue, and two AAPI Candidate Forums for the primary and general elections, which were both held in Seattle's Chinatown/International District. We are also grateful to groups like the Chinese American Civic Association and the employees of companies like Ernst & Young, who donated their time leading up to the election to help people register to vote.

While there have been increases in AAPI voter engagement rates, AAPIs continue to lag behind other racial groups in voter registration and voter turnout at the national level. According to AAPI Data, only 56% of eligible Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders nationally are registered to vote. These rates of registration are behind White (74%), Black/African American (70%), and Latino (57%) groups. In 2016, Asian American voter turnout was 49%; for Pacific Islanders, turnout was 41%. In comparison, turnout rates for Whites and Blacks/African Americans were 65% and 59% respectively. For Latinos, turnout was closer to AAPIs at 48%. Here in Washington State, 2016

AAPI voters contacted by our AAPI Democracy Initiative voted at a rate of 74%.

turnout was much stronger. Our partners at the Win/Win Network estimate that AAPI turnout for 2016 was 67%, while AAPI voters who were contacted by ACRS through our AAPI Democracy Initiative voted at a rate of 74%.

Along with the ACRS Board of Directors, Civic Engagement Task Force, and Friends of ACRS, we look to our community members to join us in lifting up AAPI voices, and raising voter registration and voter turnout rates. If they are eligible, talk with your friends and family members about the importance of registering to vote and of voting in every election. If you care about health equity, immigration, climate justice and other issues – join us in civic engagement events, help to raise and make visible the issues that are most important to our communities. Lend us your skills and resources as we build our capacity to support our community’s immigrants and refugees as they face continued threats from increasingly hostile national policies.

Finally, please join us in welcoming Joseph Shoji Lachman, our new civic engagement program manager as he leads the program as a community hub for resources, information, training and development, and working toward our goal of an AAPI community that is fully engaged in our democracy. ■

Rally attendees were able to register to vote and get answers to their questions.

Photo by Dean Wong.



A CULINARY JOURNEY A SUCCESS



Apna Bhanga Crew kicks off a lively evening at the ACRS gala.

Photo by Joysha Fajardo

More than 500 ACRS supporters, corporate partners and volunteers joined us at *A Culinary Journey* this year and contributed to its huge success. We featured the cuisine of local chefs Rachel Yang (Joule/Revel/Trove/Revelry), David Kong (Perché No) and Jinho Han (Seven Beef). Guests savored curry puff appetizers, beef brisket in crispy rice shells, a delicious miso black cod entrée, and smoky rice pudding with kabocha squash for dessert.

A Culinary Journey is more than just an exploration and celebration of food. As Chef Rachel Yang addressed in her cooking demonstration, her passion for cooking stems from her immigrant experience. Both call for pride in one's heritage and taking the risk to incorporate elements from a new culture. Those of us who are immigrants or children of immigrants can relate to feeling "different" and trying to blend in with the mainstream culture. We take inspiration from Chef Yang, who takes a bold approach toward blending both worlds in her cuisine. This is what makes her restaurants so popular and appealing to so many.

Both ACRS Board President Angelie Chong and guest speaker Congressmember Pramila Jayapal addressed how crucial it is to continue the fight for immigrant rights, and our role as advocates for those who do not have a voice. Neta Etuale later shared her moving story about her struggle with mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse, and recovery and healing. As a Samoan American, Neta described how the culturally-sensitive programs at ACRS helped her emerge from her lowest point toward self-discovery, empowerment and independence, "I love myself today."

Together we raised more than \$135,000 when guests were asked to "raise their paddles." Along with a spirited live auction, heads or tails game, jewelry silent auction and Secret Ingredient drawings, we raised more than \$322,000 in total for ACRS programs and services supporting our community, and surpassed our goal by \$47,000! A large part of the high energy in the room was attributed to our illustrious and entertaining team of auctioneer John Curley and MC Mary Nam of KOMO 4 TV.



We extend our deepest appreciation for Presenting Sponsor Comcast NBCUniversal, Legacy Sponsor Pacific Market International (PMI), Partner Sponsor Premera and for additional support from Capital One, Muckleshoot, Seattle Healing Arts, Swedish, United Healthcare, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We are grateful for our partnerships with our business community!

Heartfelt thanks to all who joined us at *A Culinary Journey*, and particularly our dedicated gala committee,

co-chaired by ACRS Board President Angelie Chong and former ACRS board member Derek Edmonds. We look forward to celebrating our 45th anniversary and all who've helped us build ACRS over the last four and half decades. Please join us at next year's gala on October 27, 2018 at the Bellevue Hyatt! ■

- 1 Gala guests survey potential prizes through our Secret Ingredient drawings.
- 2 Rachel Yang shines on stage during the cooking demonstration.
- 3 Neta shares her story of recovery and healing.
- 4 Congressmember Pramila Jayapal reaffirms her commitment to fighting for justice for all.
- 5 Starter course by Seven Beef. Photos by Joysha Fajardo.

PRESENTING SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: COMCAST NBCUNIVERSAL



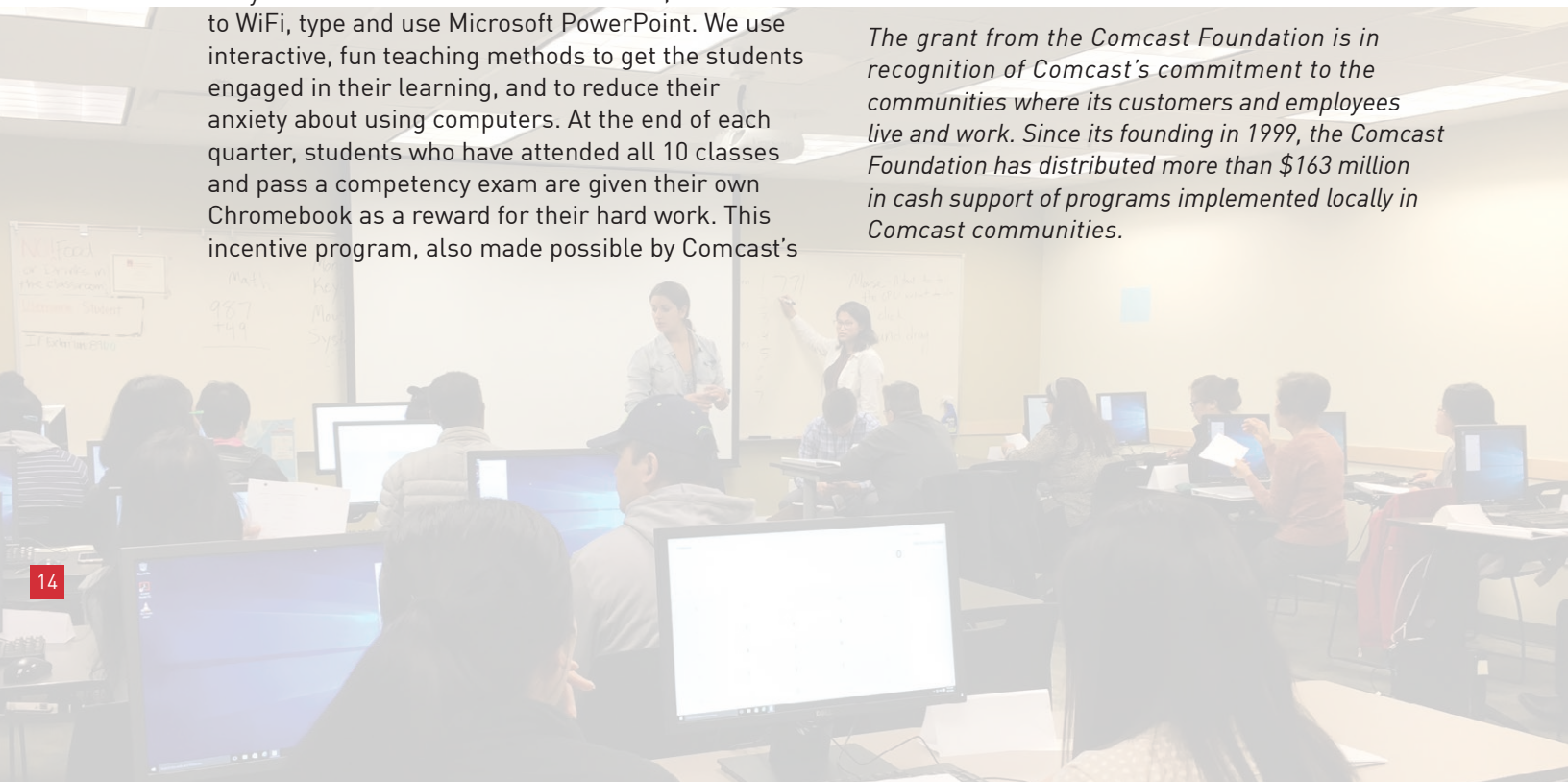
COMCAST

ACRS is grateful for generous support from Comcast NBCUniversal, which has enabled us to develop a robust, year-round digital literacy program for ACRS clients. Since September of 2016, we have been proud to offer a 10-week, 30-hour intensive digital literacy class focused on helping jobseekers. The class has a dedicated instructor and teaching assistants. Students learn the basics of computer literacy, including how to use the Internet, apply for jobs online, use email and navigate Google maps. They also learn how to use thumb drives, connect to WiFi, type and use Microsoft PowerPoint. We use interactive, fun teaching methods to get the students engaged in their learning, and to reduce their anxiety about using computers. At the end of each quarter, students who have attended all 10 classes and pass a competency exam are given their own Chromebook as a reward for their hard work. This incentive program, also made possible by Comcast's

generosity, has been extremely popular and effective with supporting our students' success.

Increasingly, digital literacy is as important for our clients as English language literacy. Without basic computer proficiency, our clients risk being left behind in the job market, in communication with their supervisor at work, at their children's schools, and beyond. We are grateful to Comcast for their support to ACRS so that we can help bridge the digital divide for our clients. ■

The grant from the Comcast Foundation is in recognition of Comcast's commitment to the communities where its customers and employees live and work. Since its founding in 1999, the Comcast Foundation has distributed more than \$163 million in cash support of programs implemented locally in Comcast communities.



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A CULINARY JOURNEY:

PRESENTING



LEGACY



PARTNER



VISIONARY



ADVOCATE

Montalcino Ristorante Italiano | SEIU Healthcare 775NW | USI

Printing: Genoa | *Entertainment:* Seattle Psych Studio | *Wine:* Community Health Plan of Washington | *Live Auction:* Vulcan | *Volunteers:* Arcora - The Foundation of Delta Dental of Washington | *Secret Ingredient:* Davis Wright Tremaine | *Heads or Tails:* Eastern Café | *Appetizer:* Perché No | *Starter Course:* Seven Beef | *Dessert:* Miller Nash Graham & Dunn LLP

Special Thanks: Crossings TV | Mary Nam, KOMO News | Starbucks

WALK FOR RICE:

PRESENTING



VISIONARY



ADVOCATE

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Entertainment: University of WA School of Social Work | *Refreshment:* East West Bank | *Refreshment:* Asian Real Estate Association of America | *Race Clock:* Coordinated Care

Special Thanks: CenturyLink | Crossings TV | Northwest Harvest
Emcees: Derek Wing, PEMCO Mutual Insurance Company and Michelle Li, King 5 News

27TH ANNUAL WALK FOR RICE: EVERY GRAIN STILL COUNTS



Walk for Rice participants engage in a Zumba session prior to the Walk.

Photo by Jack Storms.

It has been an annual tradition for a thousand plus community members to gather on the last Saturday in June at Seward Park to raise funds for the ACRS Food Bank. We were fortunate to enjoy a bright, sunny day for this year's *Walk*. Festivities included entertainment by the Seattle Chinese Community Girls Drill Team, Seattle Kokon Taiko, lion dancers, amazing martial arts demonstrators and a musical performance by Theory of Change.

Together we raised over \$272,000, which is truly a community effort thanks to:

- 84 enthusiastic *Walk for Rice* teams
- 15 staff and community fundraisers (bake sales, garage sales, happy hour, Hunger Gala, cook offs, karaoke event)
- Generous support from our corporate sponsors:

Presenting Sponsor:
Pacific Market International (PMI)

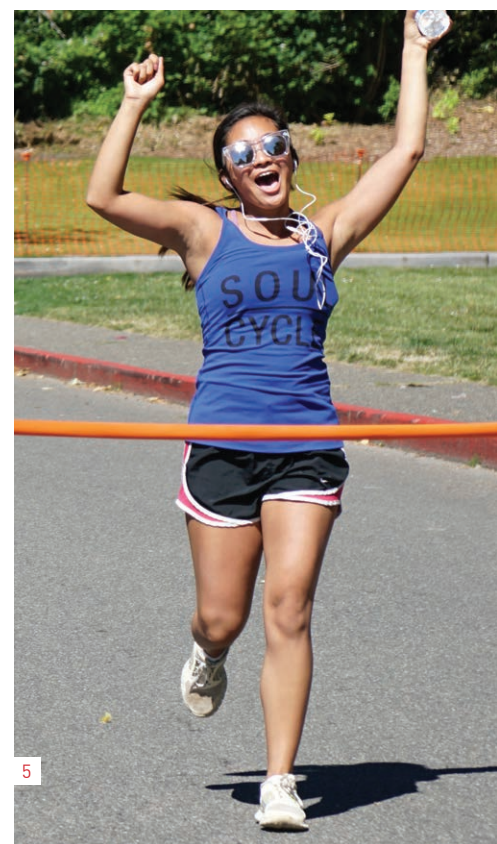
Visionary Sponsors: Amazon, Community Health Plan of Washington, Swedish

Advocate Sponsors: Amerigroup, Chinn Construction, City University, HomeStreet Bank, Kaiser Permanente, Morgan Stanley, Perkins Coie

- A unique collaboration with Northwest Harvest

Hats off to our illustrious MCs Derek Wing and KING 5 anchor Michelle Li who brought great energy and enthusiasm to our event. Kudos to our hard-working *Walk for Rice* planning committee, co-chaired by ACRS board members Jeff Liang and Nicole Ngonevolalath. This tireless group met bi-weekly for six months leading up to the big event, taking care of the many details involved with this beloved community tradition.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank *Walk for Rice* co-founders Sam Matsui, Herb Tsuchiya



and the late Bertha Lung Tsuchiya for having the vision and initiative 27 years ago to address the issue of hunger in our Asian American and Pacific Islander community and for establishing this annual fundraiser. For close to three decades the ACRS Food Bank has been serving culturally familiar food to 5,700 children, families and seniors who would otherwise face hunger or food insecurity.

Of course, a huge THANK YOU to all who ran, walked and volunteered at *Walk for Rice*! Thank you for stepping up and doing your part to fight hunger in our AAPI community. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, June 30, 2018 – see you at next year’s *Walk*! ■

1 Top finishers from different age and gender brackets pose on stage for post-*Walk* photos with our MCs and event chairs. 2 Future team captains and community leaders. 3 Puget Sound Academy of Karate members never fail to impress. 4 The refreshment tent boasts some of the best post-*Walk* snacks around. 5 A *Walk* participant crosses the finish line with gusto. Photos by Kristen Miyake and Jack Storms.

THANK YOU 2017 DONORS!

We gratefully acknowledge the following gifts recorded in our system between April 2017 and October 2017.

Corporate and Philanthropic Supporters

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45 YEARS OF MEMORIES

Calling all current and former clients, board members, staff, volunteers, donors and allies!

45 Years? Time flies!

Share your memories, stories, and photos with us and each month we'll celebrate the contributions of our community toward making ACRS a powerful place of hope, opportunity and voice for four and a half decades.

Feel free to be as creative or simple as you like. We'll take poetry, letters, selfie videos, photos or Facebook shares of your favorite memory, how ACRS helped you or someone you know and nominations for people who should be celebrated.

Send us your memories and ideas for how we can celebrate all that we've accomplished together.

Please send submissions and questions to:

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or call development director Candace Inagi at

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CELEBRATE

45

*ACRS' 45th
Anniversary
Benefit Gala*

SAVE THE DATE
October 27, 2018



**ASIAN COUNSELING
and REFERRAL SERVICE**



100 YEARS YOUNG

Pil Jung Kim is a cherished hero of the ACRS family. Mr. Kim immigrated to the United States in 1988 at the age of 68, after retiring from his high school math teaching career in South Korea. As a physically active and emotionally aware individual with training in Chinese medicine, he quickly sought opportunities to invest his energy and talents for the benefit of his new community. Mr. Kim joined the ACRS senior congregate lunch program which has been providing nutritious hot ethnic meals and meaningful social activities for older adults for over a decade.

At nearly 100 years of age, Mr. Kim shows great resilience, humor and awareness, impressing and surprising everyone he meets. It is plain to see that other community members look up to Mr. Kim as a teacher endowed with great wisdom. This communal respect stems from his astounding ability to age in a healthy way and his willingness to share his "secrets." Mr. Kim has enthusiastically shared his secrets to healthy aging most prominently through the instruction of dynamic stretching classes at our various lunch program locations and providing advice regarding Chinese medicinal techniques.

Mr. Kim chose to devote his life to social services after attending a Christian missionary school in 1930s Korea. His first priority has been to "put others first, even if one is to lose everything." He reports that his mother used to tell him, "to lose is to win," implying that peace on earth is the result of compromise, consideration and pro-active peacemaking. Seniors attest that he has made an incredible impact, especially on those suffering from social isolation and depression.

We are moved by Pil Jung Kim because of his lifelong commitment to the happiness and well-being of others. He shows how healthy aging is a manifestation of a life lived with pep in one's step and love in one's heart. He has been a mentor to his community, and has a following of thankful community members to tout the immense meaning of his influence.

ACRS community living connections (CLC) specialist, Timothy Kim says, "this is the kind of person I hope to be, a leader who inspires others not only through words, but through demonstration, example and selfless giving. I aim to emulate Mr. Kim's lifelong

▪ *Continues on page 26* |

Mr. Kim was nominated for Sound Generations' "Inspire Positive Aging" award.

Photo by Timothy Kim.



OUR SHARED HUMANITY GIVES US STRENGTH

by Harry Dixon, LMHC



THERAPY
ASSOCIATES

It seems like every day, news breaks about another outrageous instance of discrimination, aggression, violence or racism. Our society has become increasingly divided and many have adopted an “us vs them” mentality. It is no wonder that many of us feel more isolated, alone, disconnected and afraid.

The “us vs them” mentality makes us question the motives and intentions behind the actions of others, and we often interpret these to be malevolent and designed to hurt us. We start to blame and accuse others for their beliefs, which leads to disconnection and misunderstanding.

The “us vs them” mentality makes us ask, “why do you think this way?” It can be accusatory and make others feel small and unimportant. When we take the time to learn about another person with compassion and non-judgment, we stop focusing on the differences that divide us and start focusing on the commonalities between us. We stop asking “Why?” and start asking “How did you come to this conclusion? Please help me understand.” This drives connection, intimacy and understanding. It is easier to adopt the “us vs them” mentality because it is a deeply-rooted protective response, but it will betray us by driving us deeper into isolation. Choosing compassion is a much more vulnerable and difficult path, but ultimately the path that will bring us all back together.

As human beings, we are social creatures that are wired for and thrive through connection with others. When we feel lonely, our bodies and our brains tell us that we are lacking connection. When loneliness is prolonged, we may feel pushed out of society and excluded. We can often act in ways that try to alleviate the pain of loneliness by shutting down and telling ourselves that we’re better off alone. When we do this, the result is often even less connection, less empathy, less understanding and *more* defensiveness. To combat loneliness, we need to first identify what we’re feeling and have the courage to see it as a

sign to invest in meaningful connection rather than shutting down. We must choose to be vulnerable and brave in pushing through the discomfort and pain that loneliness can bring, and express and meet our need for connection.

One can find healing through human connection. Counseling is an example of this, and how through compassion and empathy, we can build better and stronger bonds between people and a more inclusive society. In a therapy session, the counselor models compassion and non-judgment because doing so allows the client to feel safe in exploring the issues that bring them in. This compassion and non-judgment leads to greater trust and understanding between the client and the counselor, and allows for deeper discoveries, greater healing and growth. Even if the counselor and client may be on two different sides of an idea, the client can feel validated and heard. It is this type of connection that heals loneliness and solves the “us vs them” mentality. However, it requires courage to step into places where we may have to acknowledge that we do not have all of the answers, and a willingness to recognize the humanity of others. As Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron says, “compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It’s a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.” ■



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.

Harry is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor with ACRS Therapy Associates.

LEARNING TO LOVE HERSELF AGAIN (CONT.)

| ■ Continued from pg. 3 |

and supported employment teams so that Neta could find a place to live and a job to support herself. Polu shares that “ACRS is one place, where whether you’re a youth, an elder, immigrant, refugee or even American born, you can come to find hope, opportunity and your voice. Having various services housed under one roof at ACRS plays a very important role in an individual’s recovery. If Neta hadn’t been able to get these services, I think her journey would’ve been even more difficult.”

Today, Neta feels that “[her] life has changed so dramatically. I have peace of mind. Every day when I wake up, I’m grateful. I’m no longer that addict that needs to get high. I no longer have to have some kind of chemical to cope. I love myself today. Nothing can hold me back, not even myself. I’m no longer tied to my past. My future looks bright. So bring it on.”

Stories like Neta’s are just one of the many stories that are being written every day at ACRS. ■

100 YEARS YOUNG (CONT.)

| ■ Continued from pg. 24 |

ethical standard, because, as he has made clear, not only does one receive the benefits of a conscience free from guilt when living by his words, but the world will also surely become a better place for all to live in. Kim’s healthy approach to physical activity and unending devotion to peace on earth are modalities to live by. Mr. Kim is a true friend, role model and an inspiration.”

Last year, Timothy nominated Mr. Kim for the prestigious Sound Generations “Inspire Positive Aging” award for teaching dynamic stretching classes. Mr. Kim taught himself to play both the piano and violin. He followed his musical passion and started a trio with another violin player and cellist in Seattle. Together, the three of them volunteered

their talent to anyone who was in need, including local churches and nursing homes. When Mr. Kim’s neck became too stiff to continue playing, he made sure to donate his violin for students to learn the art.

His only family in America lives in Los Angeles. However, Mr. Kim says he would never leave Seattle. Mr. Kim can be found visiting the Seattle Korean Elder Association and Club Bamboo, where he enjoys socializing, exercising, attending education workshops and eating nutritious food. He treats everyone with the utmost respect and maintains such a youthful spirit. Mr. Kim is proud of being a part of ACRS’ work to offer hope, opportunity, meals and activities for older adults, and making a difference in the lives of others. ■



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Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

