



Southeast Asian Voices



Compiled by the
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging



Introduction

WELCOME TO THE THIRD publication of the Senior Voices series. I hope you have enjoyed the first two publications, *Senior Voices* and *Pacific Islander Voices*, which tell the diverse stories of participants of many backgrounds who have benefitted from the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

Southeast Asian Voices is being produced to convey the unique characteristics, experiences and challenges of SCSEP participants who are immigrants and refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma and Malaysia who are utilizing the SCSEP program to learn new skills and to improve their lives.

NAPCA estimates serving over 15,000 low-income, limited and non-English speaking immigrant and refugee older adults of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) descent since 1989. Without which, many of these AAPI older adults would have little or no employment opportunities to support themselves and their families.

Because SCSEP participants learn employable skills through community-based assignments, participants are exposed to various work environments through which they are able to gain the knowledge and vital self-confidence needed to work in these settings. Community-based organizations also benefit from the SCSEP program by enhancing existing services or building new capacity with the help of the participants assigned to their agencies. The dual nature of the SCSEP program is critical and ultimately benefits the community-at-large. The stories that follow are perspectives of NAPCA SCSEP participants and the community-based host agencies that provide training to them. I hope you are inspired by their stories.

Many thanks to Ron Chew of Chew Communications, Edward Echte and Debbie Louie for their expert ability to capture and convey these important oral history-based interviews.

Christine Takada
President and CEO
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging



Southeast Asians in America

By Edward Echtele

THE ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) population in the U.S. numbers more than 14.6 million, representing an extraordinary diversity of more than 47 ethnic groups and 100 languages. Within this broader AAPI population, those of Southeast Asian origin constitute more than 2.2 million of the overall number. Among the main groups are the Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians and Hmong. In 2010, the total number of AAPI elders who were 55 years or older accounted for about 2.95 million people. According to the U.S. Census, this number will increase to over 7 million in the next 20 years. By 2020, the share of AAPI elders will grow by 244 percent, a 12.2 percent increase annually.

The diversity within the Southeast Asian community's numerous cultures and ethnicities often confuses outsiders with little understanding of their origins and circumstances of their migration to America. While nearly four decades of residence in America has resulted in much cultural adaptation, challenges created by language, cultural differences and economic hardship often marginalizes the rapidly growing population of Southeast Asian seniors and creates difficulties relating to their American-born children and grandchildren. Nevertheless, their deeply-held ideals of hard work, self reliance and personal responsibility allows them to make the most of America's promise for a better life when allowed the opportunity.

The Southeast Asian "Wave"

The extraordinary circumstances that precipitated the migration of Southeast Asians to America make their challenges adapting to American culture distinctive in many ways. Understanding the complex events that led to their relocation to the U.S. bears a brief review.

The 1949 revolution that formed the People's Republic of China recast Southeast Asia as a front in America's effort to stem the spread of communism through its policy of "containment." In 1950, the U.S. began sending supplies to Vietnam against the spread of communism. In 1954, Vietnam was divided between the pro-Communist north and the anti-Communist south. An attack on the U.S. warship *Maddox* in 1964 led the United States to escalate the war, and by early 1965, the U.S.

began deploying ground troops in Southeast Asia. By the late 1960s, U.S. military involvement became regional in scope, involving not only Vietnam, but Laos and Cambodia as well.

At the same time, public opposition to U.S. military operations in Southeast Asia grew in the U.S., leading to the 1973 Paris Peace Accord where the U.S. agreed to withdraw troops. Northern Vietnamese forces captured South Vietnam's capital, Saigon, in April of 1975, resulting in a frenzied evacuation by officials and civilians who had collaborated with the U.S.

The first large group of refugees left Vietnam immediately following the fall of Saigon. This group mostly consisted of well-educated government officials, educators and business leaders who feared for their lives under Communist rule. The U.S. government brought refugees to one of four "receiving centers" in the mainland U.S. Host volunteer agencies matched refugees with "sponsors": organizations, families or individuals who agreed to take financial responsibility for the immigrants should they require help. Most were sponsored by families, while churches, relief organizations and individuals sponsored the remainder.

A second larger outflow of refugees from Vietnam began in 1978 as the Communists began purging anyone they saw as a threat to their rule. In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia, precipitating another exodus. Many fled into the rural countryside and hid, while others took to the seas in small fishing boats. The "boat people," as the press referred to them, were subjected to dangerous and often deadly conditions as groups of 30 or more people escaped in boats intended to carry only four or five. Unknown numbers perished while world authorities attempted rescue. Additionally, over 105,000 refugees arrived in the U.S. from Laos between 1979 and 1981. From 1986 to 1989, more than 50,000 more refugees arrived.

Initially many refugees ended up in camps in Thailand, (mostly Laotians and Cambodians), Hong Kong and Malaysia. The United Nations also set up camps in Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines to receive the refugees where they waited for permission and sponsorships to relocate to a new country. Many were able to migrate to America, again sponsored by churches, human rights organizations, families and individuals. In addition, Southeast Asian families and individuals who immigrated earlier were able to sponsor relatives, creating a "chain migration" that bolstered the small, but growing communities.

In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act granted resident status to resident non-citizens who arrived in the U.S. before 1982 and permanent status

after 18 months. Other laws prioritized the immigration of the children of American servicemen and Vietnamese women and their immediate families. Additionally, under the “Humanitarian Operations” program, the U.S. streamlined immigration for former South Vietnamese soldiers and political prisoners and their families who fought on behalf of the U.S. From 1987 to 1994, as refugee camps in Thailand and elsewhere closed, more than 56,000 Hmong refugees came to the U.S. The political situation in Southeast Asia, coupled with these new immigration reforms, led to a surge in the Asian population in America.

From 1965 to 1990, nearly five million Asians of all nationalities relocated to the U.S., comprising more than half of all new immigrants to the U.S. While most were immigrants rejoining relatives who migrated in earlier decades, approximately 20 percent, or one in five, were war refugees from Southeast Asia.

New Roots

Initially, U.S. authorities hoped to accelerate adaptation to life in the U.S. by widely dispersing the refugees. However, many quickly relocated to reunite their traditional extended families and communities in America. Large numbers migrated to the south and west where the climate was similar to that of their homelands. In California, Orange County and the San Francisco Bay Area received the largest numbers of resettled Vietnamese, while many Laotian and Hmong settled in Fresno, Modesto and Sacramento. Long Beach, California quickly became a new center for the Cambodian community.

Outside California, Houston and New Orleans also became centers for Southeast Asian communities, as well as Seattle and the Washington D.C. area. Chicago, with its large existing Asian immigrant community, became home to many Southeast Asians as well, in part due to the faith community’s efforts to serve as a sanctuary for refugees.

By 2003, there were 1.2 million Vietnamese in the U.S., the fifth largest group of Asian Americans. While California continues to be the state with the largest Vietnamese population, Texas, Florida and Louisiana are also home to sizeable numbers of Vietnamese. Since their arrival, these immigrants helped create new business districts, often adjacent to or within existing Asian immigrant neighborhoods. Despite the diverse Southeast Asian populations, these business and social centers are often referred to colloquially as “Little Saigons.”

By 2000, the U.S. Census counted nearly 200,000 Laotians of various ethnicities,

including the Lao Loum or Lowland Lao. Other Laotian ethnic groups included the Khmu, Thaidam, and Lu-Mien (Yao) mainly residing in California, Minnesota, across Wisconsin and the Carolinas. The Hmong favor traditional extended family living, and the tendency toward large families persists in America. The government originally settled most Hmong in the Midwest; however, many migrated to central California to work in agriculture. Since the 1990s, Hmong are again relocating to Midwestern cities for greater access to education and a lower cost of living.

The overall Cambodian population grew rapidly from only 16,000 in 1980 to over 170,000 in 2000. A majority of Laotian and Cambodian immigrants came from a rural background and gravitated toward agricultural work in the U.S. Limited English skills prompted many to set up their own landscape maintenance businesses.

Often ignored or subsumed by other groups, the Indo-Chinese are ethnic Chinese who immigrated to Southeast Asia centuries ago, mainly as merchants. While often prosperous, they faced discrimination within their adopted homes as perennial outsiders. They were purged by Communists after 1975 as decadent capitalists, dangerous to the new Communist ideology. In America, many, who identify themselves as Chinese, remain uncoun­ted as part of the refugee population.

Despite the dire circumstances of their relocation to America, most Southeast Asian immigrants saw the United States as a good place to make a fresh start. Those with limited education and resources found jobs that required little English proficiency such as janitorial, textile or landscaping work. Additionally, many aspired to business ownership, gathering enough funding from family and friends to start their own small businesses in the same tradition as generations of other Asian immigrants before them.

Challenges

Southeast Asians are a well-established presence in America, but they still face ongoing issues. While many Southeast Asians were fairly urbanized, others formerly lived as subsistence farmers, hunters and fishermen unfamiliar with basic elements of American life such as supermarkets and electric appliances. Subsequently, these groups faced severe barriers adapting to the wage labor economy and other technically challenging aspects of U.S. life. Some groups, including the Hmong, lacked basic literacy skills due to having no written language until recent decades.

Even after years in the U.S., psychological stress born of wartime and refugee experiences still troubles many elderly Southeast Asian immigrants. Many suffer from

nightmares and flashbacks brought on by untreated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Memories of wartime atrocities, incarceration, the loss of family members and community cohesion, professional status and material belongings still haunts first generation immigrants, especially the elderly.

Additionally, limited English skills complicates, and sometimes prevents, access to public and private assistance programs. With insufficient work histories and limited English language skills, older Southeast Asians initially relied on such assistance programs to help get by in America. However, by the 1990s, diminished funding for social programs left many low-income Southeast Asian seniors entirely dependent on family or community programs run by churches and social organizations on extremely tight budgets.

With such barriers, many Southeast Asian elders often remain in low-wage, dead-end jobs. Today fully a third of all Hmong American elders, a quarter of all Cambodian American elders, and 15 percent or more of Laotian American and Vietnamese American elders live in poverty. To make ends meet, they work extra hours or multiple jobs, leaving them exhausted and unable to access opportunities that could better their situation.

Yet Southeast Asians hold education in high regard. While many first-generation immigrants were unable to further their education, they struggled to ensure that their children had greater opportunities. However, many second-generation parents work long hours, leaving young children without parental supervision for much of the day. While the extended family structure allows some elders to serve as free childcare for their grandchildren, the dispersal of the community increasingly separates Southeast Asian American youth from the values and guidance imparted by elders.

Additionally, as American-born children of Southeast Asians became “Americanized” in their values and mores, they find themselves divided between the ideals and traditions of their elders and those values they developed growing up in America. Debates within households over cultural issues such as differing levels of acceptance for corporal punishment of children, domestic violence and age of consent to marry strains relationships between traditional elders and their more “Americanized” younger family members. The resulting separation often results in further emotional and social isolation among Southeast Asian seniors.

Due to the changing values, many older Southeast Asians fear a “loss of culture” as the communities move away from adherence to age-old beliefs and customs and feel adrift in a strange land. While family and community events continue to preserve

and celebrate many Southeast Asian cultural traditions, community organizations, government agencies, and faith communities work hard to bridge these issues.

Looking Forward

Despite the challenges of their relocation and adjustment to life in America, Southeast Asian immigrant elders demonstrate a profound desire to continue serving their communities and their families in useful capacities through work. Their traditional values of self-reliance and hard work remain deeply-ingrained, fueling a desire to support themselves and remain active into later life. As they accept new opportunities to impart these values to younger workers while learning new skills from them, their efforts challenge those who hear and see their stories to reflect on their own efforts to meet and overcome adversity.

As active senior members of the community, their long-term perspective on life, work, family and hope offers a window through which to view our own commitment to remain resilient when confronted with tragedy. By providing job training opportunities, wages, and community service, NAPCA's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is central in mitigating the unique challenges faced by the Southeast Asian elder community. The enthusiasm the SCSEP participants share through their stories demonstrates their desire to remain engaged in work and shows the revitalizing effect of employment on the individual as well as our society.

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Xuyen Doan

Born November 20, 1950, Hanoi, North Vietnam

Arrived January 1993, Seattle, WA

SCSEP Participant, Kitchen Assistant, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority, Seattle

MY HUSBAND WAS IN the military. He was in concentration camps for about seven years in the north. When he got back from the camps, he had a very hard time finding jobs.

We applied for the Humanitarian Operation program and came here. My two daughters and one son came with me.

The language was the hardest part of adjusting to America. Even if I got an interview for a job, the interviewer would say something I did not understand, so it was very hard for me.

I had to work part-time because in the morning, I had to make sure that my kids got to school okay. After I got home, I had to cook dinner. I was very busy. I worked for a sewing company for about 10 years. I was paid by the piece, so the more I made, the more I got paid. There were a lot of Vietnamese and Chinese working there. I left that job because they went out of business.

After that, I got a job as a housekeeper at a nursing home. Then I had this very bad pain in my right leg and I had to leave my job. It took about two years for it to get better. When I got better, I joined a cookie company. I put frosting on top. Then they went out of business.

I decided to volunteer at the Vietnamese Association at the Garfield Community Center. Someone there helped me get an application from NAPCA. Now I serve food. I like my work. At this assignment, I learned how to work with other people.

The thing that I like the most about America is the opportunities it has given to my kids. The standard of living is a lot better than in Vietnam. My oldest is married



now. My son is still living with me. The youngest graduated last year. Now, she has a job in New York.

When I got here, I was a little older. It was harder for me to take in a lot of things. I did not have the opportunity. So for anybody who comes here, you have to take the opportunity and try your best.

Sara Pol-Lim

Born August 21, 1968, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Arrived March 25, 1983, Gardena, CA

Executive Director, United Cambodian Community, Long Beach, CA

FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITIES in the United States are for those who have learned English. The people who struggle with language and cultural barriers are at a disadvantage since they are unable to pursue opportunities. They sometimes lose their freedom due to ignorance of policies and laws.

I got involved with NAPCA SCSEP because it was a great opportunity to assist seniors. United Cambodian Community offers advocacy and assistance to a diverse clientele, including the elderly, youth and women.

The challenges facing our agency are language, cultural and generational gaps. Unless we help seniors obtain some language and life skills, they can never bridge over to mainstream society where their children have grown up and know more than them. I hope that NAPCA can continue to support job training for seniors so that they will have the opportunities to seek freedom and enjoy their independence.





Bounrod Bounyavong

Born August 1, 1935, Sayaboury, Laos

Arrived December 17, 1986, Chicago, IL

SCSEP Participant, Office Assistant, Lao American Community Services, Chicago

I CAME TO AMERICA as a refugee. In America, there is peace. You can go anywhere and visit any other country. The English language was the most difficult thing to adjust to here. I am attending EL/Civics class, but it is still a struggle to learn the language.

The executive director of Lao American Community Services (LACS) called to ask if I was interested in getting some training. That is how I got involved with NAPCA. I learned how to fax, scan, email, Skype and use the computer to improve my typing and English. I can type in English, Lao and Thai. I enjoy helping my community members that come to LACS get the help they need.

In Laos, the Communist Party persecuted me because I was a police officer. My 25 years as an officer has helped me through difficult times. I survived for 10 years in jail. I learned how to read people and stay out of trouble. My dream was always to become a police officer.

The most memorable events of my life as an elder were meeting my family members in France that I had not seen in over 20 years and taking a tour of Europe with my family. In the next five years, I would like to set up a class to teach Lao American children their language, tradition and culture.

Kim Ma

Born January 4, 1954, Saigon, South Vietnam

Arrived September 9, 2009, Houston, TX

Former SCSEP Participant, Office Assistant, Asian American Family Services, Houston

MY HUSBAND SPONSORED ME to come to America. It is hard for me because I don't know a lot of people here. I don't have much work experience in America, so I cannot compete with American workers.

I miss my family and friends in Vietnam. But in my new country, the air is fresh. I feel safe here because people follow the laws. I also like the food and I learned how to drive. Life is not easy at all, but you have to try your best.

A friend told me about NAPCA. I was training to be an office assistant. I learned a lot working at Asian American Family Services, like using the computer, organizing the front desk and talking to people who come in for help. After my training, I was hired by Asian American Family Services as an office assistant. In Vietnam, I worked in human resources, so I like to talk to people. I help them see the change in people at this agency.

America is a land of dreams. I don't want to become rich. I just want a stable job and a good life with my family. One of my dreams is to become a citizen so I can help sponsor my kids to come and be with me.



Tuyet Le

Born January 20, 1972, Saigon, South Vietnam

Arrived May 5, 1975, Fort Chaffee, AR

Executive Director, Asian American Institute, a member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, Chicago, IL

ON APRIL 30, 1975, Saigon fell and my family left our home. I was only three years old when we arrived in the U.S., the youngest of five children. Once we got here, my family, along with thousands of other Vietnamese refugees, lived in military barracks. We waited there until a Lutheran church in Milwaukee was willing to sponsor us out of the camps, help us find a home, jobs, and help us adjust to life here.

The most difficult part about adjusting to life here was finding a sense of identity. I wasn't very Vietnamese compared to other kids who spoke Vietnamese fluently. I wasn't American because I wasn't White, much less born in the United States. Even when I was in elementary school, I was very much aware of the ambivalent relationship that Americans had with Vietnam — the anger, the frustration, the guilt. American adults would often attempt to engage me in political lessons about the War. I didn't want to know about Nixon or Kissinger or napalm, so I purposely kept myself ignorant and hid from my history, hoping to stop the conversations that reduced my culture to a 20-year war. I went through my childhood not knowing where I fit in and I was too afraid to know about my family's story.

What I appreciate most about the U.S. is the courage that Americans had to create refugee policies that allow entire families to have an entire American life. Our host families invented a new definition of community, one that included us. That principle of inclusion — accepting the stranger among you as your neighbor — is one that we must continue to have the courage to fight for.

In college, I learned about the history of Asians in America. For the first time, I connected to the United States as a part of this country's long immigration story.



Now, I am the executive director of the Asian American Institute, a policy and advocacy organization dedicated to empowering Asian Americans. In this role, I work to project the stories of Asian Americans into public policy to create equity. There is still much work to do, but working with NAPCA and having a senior participant of SCSEP helps make our voices heard loud and clear.

Em Nguyen

Born July 2, 1945, Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam

Arrived January 10, 2004, Alexandria, VA

SCSEP Participant, Senior Services Assistant, Boat People SOS, Inc., Houston, TX

MY WIFE WAS IN the U.S., so I came to join her. It was difficult adjusting to life here because I did not know anyone. I miss my life in Vietnam. We have nice beaches there. But everything in America is good, especially the freedom and the liberty. I want to be a U.S. citizen someday.

A friend told me about SCSEP. I have learned to use a computer from taking ESL classes and I enjoy typing news articles at my assignment. I help type articles for Boat People SOS's monthly bilingual newspaper called *Mach Song/Life Stream*. Our *Mach Song* media programs reach thousands of Vietnamese households in the Greater Houston area and bring attention to a wide variety of relevant issues and community-based initiatives.

I like learning new things and have learned a lot at our quarterly meetings. I also appreciate interacting with other people. Enjoy work wherever you can. Help people and work hard together like a family.





Huy Leap

Born February 9, 1943, Kandal, Cambodia

Arrived December 18, 2006, Chicago, IL

SCSEP Participant, Gardening Assistant Trainee, Little Tokyo Service Center Community Development Corporation, Asian and Pacific Islander Older Adults Task Force, gardening site at the California Recreation Center, Long Beach, CA

WHEN I WAS IN Cambodia, I suffered many hardships during the communist regime. I had no food to eat. Everybody was starving. We had no freedom. I came to America to find the freedom to do whatever I want. The language, the weather and finding a job are the most difficult things about life here. I miss my family in Cambodia. I have three children there.

I found out about NAPCA from the United Cambodian Community. I am enjoying my training. I like gardening. I have learned new planting methods and enjoy seeing the plants and flowers grow in the community garden. I am also learning English at my training site.

I want a new life. I know that language is very important, so I want to improve my English to get a job, communicate with people and help other Cambodians in the community.

Ah Nge Toh

Born July 1, 1947, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Arrived August 4, 1984, New York, NY

SCSEP Participant, Library Assistant, Walter Branch of the Houston Public Library, Houston, TX

MY HUSBAND WAS ALREADY here in America, so I came to join him. I had a hard time with the language barrier. It was very hard for me to find a job, but eventually I got work at a store selling clothes.

I have three children. One of them lives in Texas and the other two live in California. They were able to immigrate to America for college. Two now have permanent resident cards and one is a citizen.

A friend told me about NAPCA and the helpful programs there. I work at the Houston Public Library and practice my English when I am there. I enjoy learning and helping out around the library. I have learned to work hard and be happy. Be happy to work at any job. I want to continue working to earn money.



An Luong

Born July 5, 1941, Binh Long, Saigon, South Vietnam

Arrived February 2002, Seattle, WA

SCSEP Participant, Janitorial Assistant, International District Housing Alliance, Seattle

ICAME TO THE United States for more freedom. Living in a communist country was just too hard for me. I was sponsored by my older brother and came here, just me and my wife, to Seattle. Being able to communicate was the most difficult part of adjusting to life here. America is very different from Vietnam. When



you work in Vietnam, at 12 o'clock, you go home. You take a lunch and you come back at any time. In Vietnam, it is not so rushed.

Family is what I miss the most in Vietnam. I took classes so I could get my citizenship to sponsor my kids over here. It was very difficult, but I tried my best. My kids came in 2009.

Since I came here, I worked driving a truck for about two years. Then I worked in a market cutting fish. I worked there for only a month because the work was too hard.

I heard from a friend about NAPCA. He was going to apply, so he said, "Come with me." Now, I work at the International District Housing Alliance. I learned to use the computer and work in an office. I learned other things, too. When I was at Kawabe House, I helped with the meals for seniors. I liked working with others there.

I think it is very important to have an open heart. If someone new comes in and asks you questions, you should always open your hands and help them out. You want to treat people the way you want to be treated.

Sarah Naw

Born September 6, 1953, Mawchi, Burma
Arrived December 9, 2010, Houston, TX
SCSEP Participant, Janitorial Assistant, Houston
International Health Foundation



IN BURMA, I COULD support my family easily. But I was afraid in my country, so I escaped with my family to a refugee camp in Thailand. We were sponsored by a refugee program and came to America.

The standard of living here is higher compared to Burma, so I needed to find

work. I found out about NAPCA SCSEP through my caseworker. My job in Burma was working on a farm. In Thailand, I helped teach some English. Now my training here is to help translate for other Burmese people at the Houston International Health Foundation.

I like the coffee and all the different kinds of food in America. I can worship freely here, not like in my home country. Now, I know what freedom is like. I want my daughter and son-in-law to get good jobs. I hope that my granddaughter will get a good education without forgetting her culture and where she came from.

Kompha Seth

Born February 5, 1942, Surin, Thailand

Arrived in 1975, Chicago, IL

Founder and President, Cambodian Association of Illinois, Chicago

ALTHOUGH I AM CAMBODIAN, I was born in Thailand. After high school graduation in 1964, I went to Cambodia. I was a monk from 1964 to 1970 and served in the Cambodian army as an interpreter. During the genocide in 1975, 24 of my 25 family members were killed in Cambodia. Only my sister-in-law survived.

I came to the United States by myself in the first wave of refugees. When I came here, there were no organizations helping Cambodian refugees, so I founded the Cambodian Association of Illinois in 1976. There were many efforts on collecting power and voices from refugees, so we were able to create the Cambodian Network Council as a national organization. However, it did not last after 2005 because of funding cuts. In 2010, we started the National Cambodian American Organization to replace the voice we lost from the Cambodian Network Council.

There are two major challenges that our community faces in the United States. One is recovering from survival mode as a result of the genocide. The other is bridging the gap between young and old generations.

Most Cambodian refugees are from rural areas, which means they did not have problems in terms of food and housing. They also had no opportunities for

education. Now, they have to pay for food and housing, and they have no job skills to work here.

The other challenge is the identity issue for younger generations. Older people see the young as challenges. If we have more opportunities to learn about and know each other, we will be more able to facilitate bridging them together.

I miss my friends from Cambodia. My soul is from there. I am so proud of being Cambodian and contributing to the Cambodian community. I believe that our community needs leadership that can be accomplished in four ways: social services, healing, social change and sustainability.

There are diverse senior ethnic groups in our society and they should be connected to help each other. I want to see NAPCA extend its work and collaborate closely with different ethnic groups. I will continue to help empower Cambodian individuals and raise collective voices and power in the Cambodian community. I always think, “I am the one who is responsible to resolve the problem.”



(From left) Kompha Seth and Dary Mien outside the Cambodian Association of Illinois Cambodian Heritage Museum & Killing Fields Memorial, Chicago.

Dary Mien

Born in 1969, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Arrived in 1981, Chicago, IL

Executive Director, Cambodian Association of Illinois, Chicago

I CAME TO THE United States with my parents as refugees in 1981. At that time, refugees had to have sponsors to come over. Sponsors could be family members or organizations. My cousin sponsored my family to come. I do not know my exact birth date. During the genocide, most birth certificates were burned and most Cambodian families had nine or 10 children. My mother just remembers that I was born one day in 1969. In Cambodia, children are known by the zodiac sign in the year of their birth. I know I was born in the year of the Rooster, so 1969 makes the most sense.

After coming to the U.S., my family went to a camp for refugees. My parents took ESL classes and I was placed in school, since I was 11 or 12 at the time. Despite everything, it was actually a really great time. My family was adapting to a new life in a new country. When we went to school, my siblings and I were the only Cambodian kids there. We were unfamiliar with American culture and began to face discrimination at that time. While other students were going on summer vacation, I felt it was important to study and learn the lessons for the upcoming school year. As a result, I became a teacher's pet.

I was a client of the Cambodian Association of Illinois when my family arrived in the U.S. They helped sponsor my family. In high school, I started volunteering here, and then I started working here after I graduated.

Because of the genocide between 1975 and 1979, we Cambodians lost the ability to trust others. We betrayed each other. Family members could not trust each other. Parents could not trust their children. We also lost community leadership. Since the tragedy, it has been hard to work together to rebuild the community. The most important thing in our community is to get back our trust and leadership. We also need to help refugees, who are survivors, heal and overcome their trauma from their home country. I want NAPCA to be able to integrate and help seniors from different ethnic and historical backgrounds stay healthy. My personal goal as executive director is to see our Cambodian community become independent and self-sufficient.

Theu Hoy

Born July 7, 1946, Kampong Thom, Cambodia

Arrived April 17, 2004, Long Beach, CA

SCSEP Participant, Office Assistant, United Cambodian Community, Long Beach

MY DAUGHTER WAS LIVING in Long Beach. That is why I came to America. After one year, I decided to stay here. I miss the family I left behind in Cambodia. I miss the relationships with my neighbors when we would sit down and talk. I also miss visiting with my friends and going to the city.

In America, I am able to see the doctor for my physical check-up, vision and dental. Another thing I like is that there is a variety of food to eat.

I got involved with NAPCA through the Cambodian Senior Nutrition Program in Long Beach. They referred me to NAPCA, so I submitted an application. NAPCA assigned me to the United Cambodian Community. I am so lucky to be in this job-training program. I feel useful and I am helping myself. I enjoy being able to meet and help people and learn new things. Everyone at the agency is friendly and helpful.

I have learned so much that I did not know before. I learned to fax documents, make copies and answer the telephone. Now, I am learning computer skills at the United Cambodian Community and I take English classes.



I was a single mother of six children in Cambodia. I lost my husband during the Khmer Rouge era. I had to sell clothes and work long hours from 7 in the morning to 9 at night. At my elder age, I had to ride a moped to get around to do business to help my children. This is what I did until I came to America.

I tell my children to get an education so they will have a job to support themselves and their families. I am proud of having raised my children. I don't want them to suffer as I did.



Khim Chhun Wu

Born October 10, 1945, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Arrived June 22, 1981, Rosemead, CA

SCSEP Participant, Administrative Assistant, National Asian Pacific Center on Aging, Los Angeles, CA

I CAME HERE BECAUSE of the war in Cambodia. I miss my friends and relatives in my country. In America, there are many opportunities to learn different things. A friend told me about NAPCA SCSEP. I have been learning computers, office procedures and customer service. I like answering the phone and doing office work. Most of all, I like to serve the community.

I remember my life under the communist government. They killed people for no reason. My family died from hunger and exhaustion. Now, I am alone. I live at the senior housing. I can go where I want. I can do whatever I want. I enjoy my life.

I always prepare myself to be strong because life must go on. I want to learn more English and computer skills. I want to be a receptionist at a hospital.

Thavone Nyatso

Born August 6, 1974, Sibounheuang, Vientiane Province, Laos

Arrived December 28, 1980, Chicago, IL

Executive Director, Lao American Community Services, Chicago

I CAME TO AMERICA as a refugee from Laos. For the first couple of years, I didn't understand the language here. I miss the culture of Laos the most since most of my immediate family is in the U.S. The opportunity to better oneself is what I like the most about America.

Lao American Community Services is the only organization with paid staff serving Lao refugees and immigrants in Illinois. There is another Lao organization,

but it is run by volunteers only and is located in Elgin. The Lao community is small, so finding funding is difficult.

My role as the executive director of Lao American Community Services is to keep the programs running. I teach EL/Civics and citizenship classes. I accompany clients to the hospital to interpret for them and to social service offices to help translate forms and answers. I also assist clients with their immigration and citizenship issues, visa extensions and petitions to bring their families to the U.S.

We provide health advocacy with funding from the Asian Health Coalition of Illinois to educate women about cervical and breast cancer. We partner with Heartland Health Outreach

for access to health information in the Lao language and conduct research about the Lao community. Anything I can do to help my community, as long as we can help them, we will. Lao American Community Services helped my family when we first



moved here. They helped my family get our house. They helped my parents find jobs. It's through this organization that we got help, so I want to give back.

The biggest challenge in my aging community is taking care of the elders at home instead of sending them to nursing homes. My expectation of NAPCA SCSEP is to continue to fund the program so that our seniors can get jobs.

Minh-Duc Pham Nguyen

Born in Nha Trang, Vietnam

Arrived in 1975, Redmond, WA

Executive Director, Helping Link, Seattle, WA

HELPING LINK HAS BEEN serving the Vietnamese community, refugee and immigrant, over the last 18 years. Our focus is on education, so we provide English as a Second Language classes and citizenship, computer and after school programs. We do some information and referral services, but it's only for our clients who attend our programs.

In 2010, we served about 800 families. In the Asian community, families average four people. So we can help seniors or we can help mom and dad or the kids. Our volunteers are the heart and soul of this organization. Ninety-nine percent of the work is done by volunteers.

I think the biggest challenge for myself is having my dad in his late 70s. He's 78 years old and there's not a lot of activity for him to get involved in. My father started the first Vietnamese newspaper in the state of Washington. He was very active, but now because of his health, how can seniors like him be more involved and feel like they're a part of daily life? He still wants to do things, but transportation is an issue, health is an issue. And then for seniors who have recently come over within the last five years, they have a horrendous situation not only because of the language barrier, but they also lack skills.

Having a program like NAPCA gives them the opportunity to learn new skills and allows them to participate in society and feel like they're contributing instead



(From left) Minh-Duc Pham Nguyen and Tsi Kao outside Helping Link, Seattle.

of being at home. Most of the homes that they're in now are small apartments in Rainier Valley and Beacon Hill. It would drive me crazy staying home every day, 24 hours a day, just having walls surrounding you and neighbors that you can't really speak to. And with the laws and all the crime that happens in the city, they're afraid. They're locked behind the door when their children go out to work because they can't do anything. They don't want to be a victim and they don't want to do something wrong or take the wrong bus and never be able to get home again.

We have Vietnamese seniors now that live out in suburban areas in their late 60s and 70s. They're retired. They want to be involved. They can't be involved in their communities because maybe they're one Asian out of a group of 10 people. They don't think they're being heard, they don't think that they can really be a part of it. And so they want to come to, for example, Helping Link in the morning to play games, to chat, a group to have coffee with.

But as a small nonprofit, we're open from 1 to 9 p.m. so we can offer classes in the evening for working folks. We rely heavily on volunteers from the University of Washington and Seattle University, working professionals. They can only come here after work. So our place doesn't really hop until after 3 p.m. until we close. Then it's

just full of activity. In the morning, we have the space, but we just don't have the funding to keep it open.

The senior that works here with us, Mr. Kao, he was an electrician in Vietnam. That's a skill, and with that skill here, you can get paid quite a bit. But not knowing the code, not knowing the rules and regulations, his training assignment now is maintenance. But as you can see, he keeps this place sparkling clean. And all our volunteers really appreciate him because he's very quiet, but he's very kind in his own way and he takes care of everyone.

Tsi Kao

Born in Guangdong Province, China

Arrived November 2005, New Jersey

SCSEP Participant, Office Maintenance Trainee, Helping Link, Seattle, WA

I WAS THREE YEARS OLD when I moved from China to Hong Gai in North Vietnam. In 1954, I moved to South Vietnam. I worked in electronics in Vietnam, fixing all kinds of appliances, especially TVs. When I first came to this country, the biggest challenge was looking for a job. The language was a problem and I was unfamiliar with the society. By working, I could earn money to pay my bills.

At Helping Link, I work from 1 to 6 pm. I vacuum, mop the floors, clean the tables and do janitorial work. It is a joy to keep the place clean. I feed the kids snacks and water. The kids are from seven to 14. When I help with the programs for children, I can practice English with them.

I like working there because it is a joy seeing the kids each day and seeing their happy faces. I enjoy being around children because it really pleases me to see the kids full of energy, so innocent and full of life.

I have four children in Seattle and one in New Jersey. All of my children are in this country, so I have no desire to go back to Vietnam. I want to be with my family. I am happy here. I now have two grandchildren in New Jersey and one in Seattle. I like to work because I feel useful. I want to work as long as I am able to do so.



Naysiek Mey

Born April 4, 1947, Kampong Cham, Cambodia

Arrived in 2002, Long Beach, CA

SCSEP Participant, Kitchen Assistant Trainee, Little Tokyo Service Center Community Development Corporation, Asian and Pacific Islander Older Adults Task Force, Cambodian Senior Nutrition Program at the California Recreation Center, Long Beach

I CAME TO AMERICA to reunite with three of my children. I enjoy the freedom here and the good health care system in the U.S. Learning to speak English and finding a job are very difficult for me. I miss my family in Cambodia. My other children are still there.

I learned about NAPCA from friends that I met at the California Recreation Center. I am training to be a kitchen assistant and am learning about food preparation and serving food. I am also learning English. I like the training because it keeps me active. I help in the kitchen, make healthy food and meet lots of people.

When I was in Cambodia, I had eight children. Two of them died under the communists because they did not have enough to eat.

Language is very important. I need to learn how to speak English so I can communicate with people. This is my goal. I also want to find a job.

Muon Van Vu

Born March 19, 1950, Ninh Binh, Vietnam

Arrived November 20, 2006, Chicago, IL

SCSEP Participant, Office Aide, Vietnamese Association of Illinois, Chicago

MY BROTHER SPONSORED ME, my wife and one of my sons to come to America. I immigrated here to look for a better life for my family. I once had a job cutting meat at a supermarket for about a year. I lost the job because it was hard work and the work condition was cold. I am trying to learn some English to find a better job. I regularly attend ESL classes at the Vietnamese Association of Illinois.

I came to the Vietnamese Association to look for a job and to chat with friends. Dung Nguyen, the community care program supervisor, introduced me to the NAPCA Title V program after he learned that I was having a hard time finding work.

Now, I am working at the Vietnamese Association. I answer phone calls and arrange books in the library. I have learned how to contact clients for appointments and how to take messages and assist with program activities. I explain to clients the programs and activities at the agency. When I can help them, I feel happy.

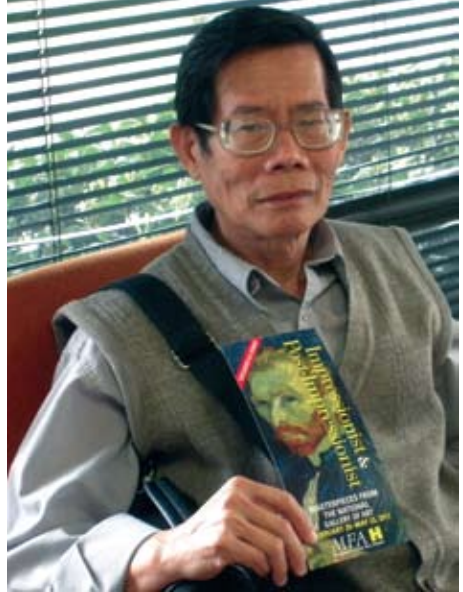
When I first came here, I went to downtown Chicago. Chicago is unbelievable to me. It's too big, too modern for me because I came from a small country. I went through two wars in Vietnam. I try to forget the past and look forward to the future. I want to get a job to support my family here. I will become a U.S. citizen. I expect to get a better job and live a more comfortable life.



William Pho

Born April 12, 1949, Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam

Arrived January 11, 1982, Honolulu, Hawaii
SCSEP Participant, Office Assistant, Viet Vets Foundation, Inc., Houston, TX



I **T IS DIFFICULT TO** get used to the culture here. I miss my neighborhood in Vietnam. I miss my friends and family. We had good times over there, especially at the beach. But there are more opportunities here to learn and build a strong community. We have more freedom.

Through NAPCA, I am training at Viet Vets. I help veterans who have problems because of the war. Through my assignment, I have learned how to interact with many different types of people and to use the computer. I like what I am doing because I get to help people.

It is important to share your skills with others. Together, we can build a community. We should all help care for the children and the elderly. My goal is to bring social work to Vietnam and to help provide a better education for the young.

Hong V. Nguyen

Born May 15, 1947, Da Nang, Vietnam

Arrived September 8, 2005, Chicago, IL

SCSEP Participant, Janitorial Aide, Vietnamese Association of Illinois, Chicago

I **HAVE NINE CHILDREN:** five sons and four daughters. Only one son is here. I came to America to unite with my son and look for a better life. Life in America is much better than life in Vietnam. I like the freedom here to talk freely with people. I usually go to Vietnamese Association (VAI) to play chess and read

Vietnamese magazines. I also asked about working at VAI. They introduced me to the NAPCA SCSEP program.

I do the cleaning work in the VAI office and the library. I also go to ESL classes at the agency. I am very happy to have the opportunity to work and to learn new things. I learned how to do janitorial work here.

Having a good job is the most important thing in one's life. In the next five years, I want to become a U.S. citizen. I will apply for a good job to earn more money and send some to my children.

My life in Vietnam was hard and poor. I went to sea to catch fish and barely made a living out of it. When my son sponsored me to America, I was very happy. I will live another life.



Tin Y. Aye

Born October 9, 1947, Momeik, Northern Shan State, Burma

Arrived March 15, 1992, Los Angeles, CA

SCSEP Participant, Library Aide, Gardena Mayme Dear Memorial Library, Gardena, CA

AFTER WORKING AS A United Nations Volunteer Specialist in Bhutan, I came to America on a tourist visa. I applied for political asylum because I feared persecution due to my activities against the military regime of Burma while I was working in Bhutan.

What I miss most about Burma is the mentality of conduct and manner which is anchored within me as an Asian. I miss the cultural gatherings, such as the Water Festival and the End of Buddhist Lent (Light Festival). I also miss the friendly people.

After I was laid off in 2000, the Employment Development Department counselor gave me information about NAPCA. I first started as a NAPCA enrollee

in 2002. I have learned so many new skills that I cannot count them all. I have learned more English, computer skills, typing and operation of office equipment.



There is also customer service, problem solving, prioritizing, decision-making and so on.

It is very difficult for people over age 55 to find a job, even those who have much experience. I have a mechanical engineering degree from Germany and worked there as a scientific technical coordinator for many years, including my assignment with the United Nations. I was also a transport and equipment officer and many more. But as a senior, it isn't easy to get even an entry-level post.

I think one needs to make a correct decision to choose one's education for a career. Stick to that profession and work hard to advance to an executive level while making investments. Then retire early and help loved ones, do hobbies and practice in religious matters. Working allows me to contribute my knowledge as I still need to be more fulfilled in life.

Bounto Chansiri

Born June 5, 1937, Vientiane, Laos
Arrived December 2, 1980, Chicago, IL
SCSEP Participant, Office Aide, Lao American
Community Services, Chicago



SINCE I WAS A police officer in Laos, I was persecuted by the Communist Party. I was in jail for five years before fleeing to America as a refugee. I can read and write in English, but I have trouble understanding much of what I am reading and writing. I like the resources available to those who come to this country and the generosity of the United States. I like the freedom in America,

but I miss the old way of living in Laos before the Communist Party took over.

I got involved with NAPCA when I called the Lao American Community Services (LACS) to ask if there were any job openings. I help out in the office. Since I have been at LACS, I have learned how to fax, scan and use the computer to improve my typing and English. I enjoy learning and doing something new.

I would like to get the other Lao organizations to cooperate and work with LACS. There is not enough unity in our community even though we are small. If the Lao community were to band together, we could make the community better. But it is fractured into many different clubs with different agendas.

Religion has become very important to me. I became a Christian late in life. I am active in my church community and teach children every week at the Lao Evangelical Free Church in Rockford. I have a certificate to teach about the Bible.

After my heart bypass surgery, I learned to appreciate every day. Now, I always take care of myself, especially health-wise.

Hoeurn Seng

Born May 11, 1945, Kampong Thom, Cambodia

Arrived March 12, 2006, Long Beach, CA

SCSEP Participant, Office Assistant, United Cambodian Community, Long Beach

I CAME TO AMERICA because it is peaceful and because of the education system to learn anything you want. In America, I can see a doctor. In Cambodia, if you don't have money, the doctor will not see you.

I like freedom of speech and I enjoy the weather in Long Beach. This country is beautiful with a lot of nice places to see.

I came to United Cambodian Community (UCC) to learn English. A friend told me about NAPCA. Now I am learning English, copying, and learning to use a computer. I also work with people that come to UCC for help. I enjoy the people,



always friendly. The staff people at UCC teach me new things about the office. I enjoy picking up the telephone to speak to people.

I have learned how to take care of my diabetes. I learned what food to eat or not to eat to be healthy. I took the chronic disease self-management class and learned about techniques to manage my disease. I want to be a healthy person and I tell others of all the things I learned.

In Cambodia, I survived with no food and no medicine. I lost many family members during the Khmer Rouge era, so I have learned that one has to be patient and good things will come your way. I strongly feel that I can teach people to care for others. Karma is important.

Kim N. Pham

Born December 3, 1942, Dalat, Lam Dong Province, South Vietnam

Arrived May 29, 2005, Houston, TX

SCSEP Participant, Clerk Trainee, Vietnamese Community Center of Houston

MY BROTHER SPONSORED ME to come to America. All of my family is here. Life here has been difficult because I try to please everyone. I miss my friends and family back home. But in America, the air is clean, not polluted. I have made a lot of new friends.

Since working at the Vietnamese Community Center, I have learned about new resources available in the community. I enjoy my work because I like to help people. I have met lots of younger people. They respect me for my wisdom and learn from me.

My life is humble and simple. I try to be friendly and nice to people whether I like them or not. That helps me overcome obstacles. I also try to live in the present and be positive. Don't dwell on the sad things in your life. Focus on the happy things.



Trish Nguyen

Born May 7, Saigon, South Vietnam

Arrived May 1992, Santa Ana, CA

Senior Branch Manager, Boat People SOS, Inc.,
Houston, TX



IN 2004, I WENT TO a networking event and met a woman who told me about NAPCA, so I applied to be a host agency for the

SCSEP program. I work at Boat People SOS, which empowers both Vietnamese individuals and the community in the pursuit of liberty and dignity.

When we help the aging people in our community, we found that the Vietnamese community faces language barriers to mainstream services and information. This makes it difficult for seniors to find out what services are available to them. The problems often stem from lack of access to information or advice on what to do or who to approach. Barriers include language issues, knowledge of what is available and the attitudes and practices of service providers.

Vietnamese seniors are also more likely to face a greater level of poverty, live in poorer quality housing, and have poorer access to benefits and pensions. There is a great deal of frustration that mainstream service providers do not meet the needs of aging Vietnamese people.

Vietnamese seniors feel that the majority of services and service providers are not designed or equipped to recognize the culture and beliefs that are important to the Vietnamese community. This ranges from basics like food to a lack of knowledge and respect for religious beliefs and practices. Our Vietnamese community often has a different view of health and wellbeing, and finds that our views of complementary medicine or a holistic approach to health needs are not seen as important or relevant. Older people feel that the Westerners simply see communities as “problems” rather than respecting the fact that different communities have real strengths to be valued. Some have lost faith in mainstream services and want services from and by their own community groups. Their most positive experiences have been when their own community organizations have been adequately funded to undertake these tasks.

Eng Liok Ng

Born December 2, 1947, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Arrived July 1, 1979, New York, NY

SCSEP Participant, Library Assistant, David M. Henington-Alief Regional Branch of the Houston Public Library, Houston, TX

A **DJUSTING TO LIFE IN** America was difficult because everybody is so different. I learned a lot about American culture and language from different working experiences here. I worked as a taxi driver in New York, but I spent most of my time working in restaurants.

I miss my family in Malaysia, especially my mother. Before I came here, I saw movies about what America was like. That is why I wanted to come. I like the freedom here. You are not controlled by the government and you can express yourself here and what you want.

A friend told me about NAPCA. I like my work at the Alief Houston Public Library. I enjoy learning from books and finding out about new things. It is important to try and work no matter how old you are. Just try and work. Live a happy life! I just want to continue working.





Nongyao Varanond

Born September 15, 1947, Lampang, Thailand

Arrived November 1973, Los Angeles, CA

Executive Director, Thai Health and Information Services, Los Angeles

THE THAI PEOPLE WHO came here have suffered real badly. Many are educated, some even have Master's degrees. They come here to learn English, but ESL can be very expensive. Because of language problems, they work as kitchen help or as waiters and waitresses. They work in sewing factories and get paid five or 10 cents per piece. They need a lot to earn \$30 a day. There are only five or six garment factories left in the Los Angeles area. Most of the work has been shipped to countries like Bangladesh and Cambodia.

So I say if people have a good opportunity in Thailand, stay there. There is no work in sewing factories. To work in a restaurant, you need to be able to communicate with customers. Lots of people give up and go back.

The Thai community here is different from other Southeast Asian groups like the Laotians, Cambodians and Vietnamese. Thais didn't come here as refugees, so there is no support group available to them.

Thai Health and Information Services provides health education, outreach, information, referral services and senior job training to Thais in Los Angeles County.

We want to make sure our seniors have peace of mind, so on the first Wednesday of each month, we have 125 seniors come here and socialize. It's like a town hall meeting. They're happy. Even though they don't have much here or in Thailand, they have friends here.

I got involved with NAPCA SCSEP because I wanted to give seniors valuable job training opportunities. As a host agency, we expect that our joint partnership with NAPCA will strengthen and support the Asian community by continuing to provide job training for elders so that they become self-sufficient.

We don't have many good job opportunities in our community. We hope that the new generation can step up and do something better. We want to create small businesses, educational opportunities and internships. We are connecting with business groups, the Thai Chamber of Commerce and import-export groups to bring in merchandise and market it to the broader American community.

Dung Van Nguyen

Born October 12, 1943, Phan Thiet, Vietnam

Arrived March 2, 1992, Chicago, IL

Community Care Program Supervisor, Vietnamese Association of Illinois, Chicago

I CAME HERE AS a refugee. After North Vietnam took control of South Vietnam, I was in a reeducation camp in the jungle in North Vietnam. I was there for 10 years because I was a ranking officer in the South Vietnamese army. Through the U.S. Humanitarian Operation program, I was brought to America.

After arriving here, I worked at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. I later moved to Refugee Services, then to Chinese Mutual Aid Association. From 1995 to present, I have been employed at the Vietnamese Association of Illinois (VAI).

VAI provides social services for the Vietnamese community. There are many programs for young people and seniors. Lots of clients come to VAI looking for help. Most of the clients are Vietnamese. Clients from other Asian ethnic groups also come for help such as assistance with the application for U.S. citizenship.



I supervise the Community Care Program. I recruit clients from the community, provide services training for them and help them land jobs in the Community Care Program. I enjoy working with seniors. I enjoy helping them find jobs to improve their lives. I like to know about their lives and understand their needs. It is not enough to meet all of their needs, such as the requirement for job training and job placement. We need to find ways to provide as many services as possible to the community, especially in this current economic downturn.

I have seen seniors change their lives through participating in this program. They are happier and live more meaningful lives.

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Interviewed March 11, 2011
Host Agency: Gardena Mayme Dear Memorial Library, Gardena, CA

Bounrod Bounyavong

Interviewed March 10, 2011
Host Agency: Lao American Community Services, Chicago, IL
Interviewer: Thavone Nyatso

Bounto Chansiri

Interviewed March 10, 2011
Host Agency: Lao American Community Services, Chicago, IL
Interviewer: Thavone Nyatso

Xuyen Doan

Interviewed February 25, 2011
Host Agency: Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority, Seattle, WA
Interviewer: Ron Chew
Translator: Donovan Lam
Photographer: Edward Echlte

Theu Hoy

Interviewed March 7, 2011
Host Agency: United Cambodian Community, Long Beach, CA
Interviewer: Raymond Chavarria
Translator: Lang Nang

Tsi Kao

Interviewed March 30, 2011
Host Agency: Helping Link, Seattle, WA
Interviewer: Ron Chew
Photographer: Edward Echlte

Huy Leap

Interviewed March 11, 2011
Host Agency: LTSC CDC, Asian and Pacific Islander Older Adults Task Force, Long Beach, CA
Interviewer: Serey Hong

An Luong

Interviewed February 25, 2011
Host Agency: International District Housing Alliance, Seattle, WA
Interviewer: Ron Chew
Translator: Donovan Lam
Photographer: Edward Echlte

Kim Ma

Former SCSEP Participant
Interviewed March 9, 2011
Office Assistant, Asian American Family Services, Houston, TX

Naysiek Mey

Interviewed March 11, 2011
Host Agency: LTSC CDC, Asian and Pacific Islander Older Adults Task Force, Long Beach, CA
Interviewer: Serey Hong

Sarah Naw

Interviewed March 7, 2011
Host Agency: Houston International Health Foundation, Houston, TX
Translator: Eleanor Naing

Eng Liok Ng

Interviewed March 3, 2011
Host Agency: David M. Henington-Alief Regional Branch of the Houston Public Library, Houston, TX

Em Nguyen

Interviewed March 2, 2011
Host Agency: Boat People SOS, Inc., Houston, TX
Translator: Ann Nguyen

Hong V. Nguyen

Interviewed March 14, 2011
Host Agency: Vietnamese Association of Illinois, Chicago
Translator: Dung Van Nguyen

Kim N. Pham

Interviewed March 2, 2011
Host Agency: Vietnamese Community Center of Houston

William Pho

Interviewed March 4, 2011
Host Agency: Viet Vets Foundation, Inc., Houston, TX
Translator: Ann Nguyen

Hoeurn Seng

Interviewed March 9, 2011
Host Agency: United Cambodian Community, Long Beach, CA
Interviewer: Raymond Chavarria
Translator: Lang Nang

Ah Nge Toh

Interviewed March 3, 2011
Host Agency: Walter Branch of the Houston Public Library, Houston, TX
Translator: Eng Liok Ng

Muon Van Vu

Interviewed March 14, 2011
Host Agency: Vietnamese Association of Illinois, Chicago
Translator: Dung Van Nguyen

Khim Chhun Wu

Interviewed March 14, 2011
Host Agency: NAPCA, Los Angeles, CA

Host Agency Voices

Tuyet Le

Interviewed April 12, 2011
Executive Director, Asian
American Institute, Chicago, IL
Photo courtesy of Tuyet Le

Dary Mien

Interviewed March 31, 2011
Executive Director, Cambodian
Association of Illinois, Chicago

Dung Van Nguyen

Interviewed March 14, 2011
Community Care Program
Supervisor, Vietnamese
Association of Illinois, Chicago

Minh-Duc Pham Nguyen

Interviewed March 30, 2011
Executive Director, Helping Link,
Seattle, WA
Interviewer: Ron Chew
Photographer: Edward Echte

Trish Nguyen

Interviewed March 9, 2011
Senior Branch Manager, Boat
People SOS, Inc., Houston, TX

Thavone Nyatso

Interviewed March 15, 2011
Executive Director, Lao American
Community Services, Chicago, IL

Sara Pol-Lim

Interviewed March 2011
Executive Director, United
Cambodian Community, Long
Beach, CA
Photo courtesy of Sara Pol-Lim

Kompha Seth

Interviewed March 31, 2011
Founder and President,
Cambodian Association of Illinois,
Chicago

Nongyao Varanond

Interviewed April 6, 2011
Executive Director, Thai Health
and Information Services, Los
Angeles, CA
Interviewer: Debbie Louie

Cover photos

Top, from left: Bounrod Bounyavong, Thavone Nyatso and Bounto Chansiri outside the Lao American Community Services, Chicago. Bottom: Jessica Huynh (left) and Minh-Duc Pham Nguyen participating in an after school program at Helping Link, Seattle.

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