

# Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2016**







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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On the day after the election of 2016, the world had fundamentally changed. That morning, the SEARAC family resolved to work harder than we ever have, because we are made of strength and resilience.

We reminded ourselves that we are made of the love that grounds us to our communities. That we are brave people of color, immigrants, refugees, and warriors for civil rights and social justice. We vowed to honor the courage of those that came before us, the fighters who paved the way for us, and who never gave up hope in the face of hatred, sexism, racism, and xenophobia.

We reminded ourselves that our strength lies in our community.

As we ground ourselves for the challenges to come, we are proud to present our 2016 victories as a testimony to our collective community resilience, knowing that our communities—survivors of war, and warriors for peace—are more powerful than we have ever been.

Together through the partnership, support, and leadership of individuals and organizations across the country, we stood up to defend our community's rights to:

## **BE SEEN:**

By making history through passing California law that will make our families more visible in our health care system by disaggregating ethnic data. With better data, policy makers can see and address stark disparities across Asian American and Pacific Islander community subgroups.

## **BE TOGETHER:**

In partnership with the grassroots #ReleaseMN8 campaign, we intensified our fight to keep families together against deportation orders. By early 2017, #ReleaseMN8 detainee Ched Nin won his fight to cancel his deportation. We stand with the other families who are still fighting.

## **BE HEARD:**

With 55 newly trained advocates of our annual 3-day Leadership and Advocacy Training (LAT) program, we graduated our 1,000th



alumni—building our pipeline of national advocates to amplify a united call to Members of Congress to lead policies that address the educational needs of students, health needs of refugee communities, and immigration fixes that keep families together.

With your support, we ended the year with a new strategic plan to protect our community's civil rights and promote our self-determination and empowerment.

We now look back at 2016 as a reminder that our refugee resilience prepares us to lead and serve our communities with deep conviction and strength.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Quyen'.

Quyen Dinh



As we ground ourselves for the challenges to come, we are proud to present our 2016 victories as a testimony to our collective community resilience, knowing that our communities—survivors of war, and warriors for peace—are more powerful than we have ever been.





## ABOUT SEARAC

SEARAC is a national civil rights organization that empowers Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese American communities to create a socially just and equitable society. As representatives of the largest refugee community ever resettled in the United States, SEARAC stands together with other refugee communities, communities of color, and social justice movements in pursuit of social equity.



## AREAS OF WORK



Education



Immigration



Health



Aging



Boys & Men of Color

## STRATEGIES





## FIGHTING TO SEE AND SAVE SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN LIVES IN CALIFORNIA

Data has life-altering consequences. When Southeast Asian American health indicators are hidden within the monolithic Asian American category, our communities do not receive the targeted outreach and interventions they need to live in good health.

With support from over 100 community and civil rights organizations across California, SEARAC and our partners led the fight to break down data to uncover critical health disparities across Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian communities through AB 1726, the AHEAD Act.

Thousands signed a petition in support of the bill, hundreds sent in photos, and SEARAC's community-based partner organizations made phone calls, visited their legislators, passed local resolutions, and even organized buses of elders and students to attend a rally on the steps of the California capitol building in support of AB 1726.

And the community won. California will now require public health agencies to break down data to reveal the kinds of life saving interventions our families need, taking an important step toward true equity for Southeast Asian American communities in California.



Laotian Americans have the highest teen pregnancy rate in California at 18.9%



In California, the diabetes rate for Cambodian and Hmong Americans is 24%, compared to 7.1% for Whites, 8.4% for Asians, 11.8% for Blacks, and 12.6% for Latinos



Vietnamese Americans are 13X more likely to die from liver cancer caused by Hepatitis B than White Americans



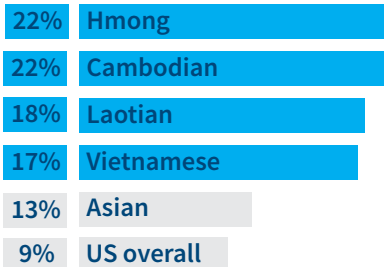
## SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN ELDERS #TellACL

Southeast Asian American elders are

**2x** as likely to live

in poverty than elders overall.

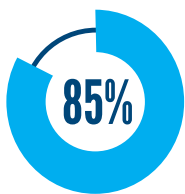
Poverty rates for individuals 65 and over:



Source: 2010 Census

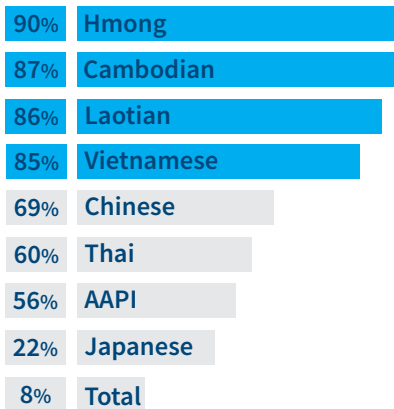


“My parents need help. **Life is hard with no English.** They do not offer Khmer anywhere else to help us.” – **Anry H.**



More than 85% of Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, and Hmong older Americans are limited English proficient.

Percent of AAPI Older Adults who are Limited English Proficient



Source: US Census '09-11 ACS, 3-year estimates



“**I need assistance with everything:** making appointments, filling out forms, reading my mail and taking me to appointments.” – **Phiun S.**

SEARAC collected more than **400** comments in four languages from Southeast Asian American community members and submitted them to the ACL.

## AGING WITH HEALTH AND DIGNITY

In 2016, SEARAC collaborated with the Diverse Elders Coalition to collect comments from over 400 Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese elders about the challenges they face and the services they need.



The DEC submitted the comments to the federal Administration on Community Living (ACL) to influence its guidance to states on how to serve diverse older Americans.

More than anything, the comments underscored how vital community-based organizations like the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia or the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota are for providing linguistically and culturally relevant care to Southeast Asian American elders.

From signing up for essential benefits, to getting a ride to a doctor’s appointment, to connecting with others to fight isolation and loneliness, our community’s elders depend on the holistic services that community-based organizations provide to age with health and dignity.



## #RELEASEMN8: GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING & NATIONAL ADVOCACY KEEP A MINNESOTA FAMILY TOGETHER

A Minnesotan for nearly all his life, Ched Nin faced deportation to a country he has never set foot in. Deportation for Ched would mean not only leaving the only home he had ever known—it would also mean leaving behind a wife, a new house, five children (including one with a life threatening heart condition), and an elderly father who depended on him for care.

Ched's wife, Jenny, refused to let ICE tear her family apart without a fight.

Jenny and a coalition of Minnesota families started the #ReleaseMN8 campaign to pressure ICE to release the families, while SEARAC worked with national organizations like the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild and Mijente to advocate intensively with the Department of Homeland Security and

Members of Congress. With SEARAC's support, Ched's story reached thousands of Minnesotans through coverage in nearly every major news outlet.

*Because our refugee families deserve to stay together.*

In early 2017, just as Ched learned he had been cleared to travel to Cambodia to endure permanent separation from his family, an immigration judge cancelled his deportation.

He walked out of detention and went home.

Dozens of other community members are bracing for deportation to Cambodia and Vietnam in 2017. With your support, we will fight aggressively to keep these families together.






# BUILDING POWERFUL LEADERS

In 2016, SEARAC's Leadership & Advocacy Training (LAT) and Leadership, Empowerment, and Advocacy Fellowship (LEAF) brought 71 emerging leaders from our communities to Washington, DC, to advocate for education equity, immigrant justice, and health access.

SEARAC has trained over 1,000 community members in 17 years to advocate at the national and state level for systems change that can improve lives for Southeast Asian American communities for decades to come.

## LAT & LEAF 2016

 71 Leaders FROM  15 States

ATTENDED  2 Congressional Policy Briefings AND

 50 Meetings with Members of Congress and Federal Agencies

## FIGHTING FOR

 +  + 

Education Equity      Immigrant Justice      Health Access



# LEAF SPOTLIGHTS

Our 2016 LEAF program fellows came from across the U.S. to advocate for their communities. Here are a few of their voices:

## Ariana Yang

PHD CANDIDATE, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



“I chose to advocate on education because I am deeply committed to eliminating the school-to-prison pipeline. I truly believe that through advocacy and policy change, we can transform our prison system and afford all youth the opportunity to thrive.”

## Kristopher Larsen

FORMERLY INCARCERATED GROUP HEALING TOGETHER (F.I.G.H.T.), SEATTLE, WA



“I chose the immigration track of the LEAF training because we have so many people in the community coming out of incarceration that also have immigration issues. They lack the knowledge to navigate that system. That’s why I’m trying to learn how to advocate more on their behalf.”

## Diani Bui

PROGRAM COORDINATOR, CENTER FOR PAN-ASIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES, ATLANTA, GA



“I attended the LAT Training in 2015. This experience made me realize how important it is for our community to advocate and participate in civic engagement. I see how organizers, advocates, and leaders in our community play important roles in bringing awareness and solutions to our issues—it’s amazing to see. Now I feel prepared and motivated to continue this work in my local community.”

## Vattana Peong

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE CAMBODIAN FAMILY, SANTA ANA, CA



“I am a passionate advocate for health equity, and the LEAF training is definitely a great place for me to connect with other advocates and leaders, build my capacity, and learn new skills that will help me become one step closer to achieving health equity. Also, LEAF has given me the opportunity to become a skilled advocate and empowered Executive Director who fights to ensure that no one in our underserved Cambodian community continues to face challenges in accessing quality mental health and health care services that are culturally and linguistically competent.”

## Tilak Niroula

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, BHUTANESE COMMUNITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE



“Mental health is an alarming problem in Bhutanese communities resettled in the U.S. Among Bhutanese who have committed or attempted suicide, 90% had some form of mental illness. Since 2008 to now, more than 59 resettled Bhutanese committed suicide. A study by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that suicide rate for the general U.S population is 12.4 per 100,000 people. However, among U.S. resettled Bhutanese refugees, the rate is 20.3. So, I’m here with other Asian American advocates to recommend some kind of durable strategy to policymakers to solve this mental health issue.”





## YOUTH IN CHARGE

The “model minority myth” claims that all Asian Americans excel educationally and economically. But this myth glosses over the tremendous diversity within Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and hides the challenges that some AAPIs face. A closer look at educational and economic outcomes among AAPI subgroups reveals stark disparities.

This year SEARAC convened the Asian American & Pacific Islander Boys & Men of Color Coalition Helping to Achieve Racial & Gender Equity (AAPI BMOCC HARGE), a multi-ethnic coalition of AAPI-serving community-based organizations throughout California. CHARGE partners aim to reveal an accurate picture of who AAPIs are and build youth leaders to advocate for solutions to heal these disparities.

In 2016, CHARGE partners helped pass AB 1726, the AHEAD Act, to uncover health disparities within AAPI communities, and advocated successfully to pass local and statewide legislation to dismantle the school-to-prison-to-deportation pipeline.

## CHARGE Partners

- Asian Prisoner Support Committee
- Asian Resources, Inc.
- AYPAL: Building API Community Power
- East Bay Asian Youth Center
- Educated Men with Meaningful Messages (Families in Good Health)
- Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
- Fathers and Families of San Joaquin
- Filipino Advocates for Justice
- Filipino Migrant Center
- Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries
- Khmer Girls in Action
- Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
- United Playaz
- Vietnamese Youth Development Center



### Per Capita Income in California

Asian	\$34,262
Cambodian	\$15,337
Laotian	\$14,497
Hmong	\$10,928



### Percent of California Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Asian	50%
Native Hawaiian	23%
Samoans	11%



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	2016	2015
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grants-Foundation/Nonprofits	\$1,576,156	\$797,762
Grants-Corporate/Business	70,722	145,000
Individual Contribution	11,806	5,876
Fundraising Income	9,441	13,238
Other Income	31,036	44,355
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,699,161</b>	<b>1,006,231</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Program expenses	\$1,151,157	\$889,845
Administrative expenses	149,961	98,349
Fundraising expenses	30,559	15,373
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,331,677</b>	<b>1,003,567</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Net assets at the beginning of the year	\$872,174	\$1,091,408
Release from Restriction	1,062	(221,898)
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>1,240,720</b>	<b>872,174</b>

# SUPPORTERS & DONORS

## FOUNDATION/CORPORATE SPONSORS

AT&T	National Education Association
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Neo Philanthropies
The California Endowment	Sierra Health Foundation
Comcast	State Farm
The Kresge Foundation	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Nathan Cummings Foundation	

### Special thanks to these community members who ran special fundraisers for SEARAC in 2016

Rattana Yeang  
Lena Tran  
Sina Sam

## HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Jamal Adam	Kelly Hill	Leyna Nguyen	Dara Stieglitz
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Sean Dinh	Duabhav Lee	Serina Reckling	Bai Vue
Joy Dosado	Tevy Leyson	Sam Robinson	Sara Vue
Sophal Ear	Cherry Lim	Kelly Running	Alton Wang
Saroeun Earm	Edward Lin	Serena Sam	Jean Wing
Sokho Eath	Jennifer Lindquist	Sina Sam	Chaoya Yang
Lowell Ens	Asiannight Live	Joe Schaeffer	David Yang
Kathy Quenemoen Erickson	Jason Ly	Adelia Schaeffer	MaiKa Yang
Ngoc Estello	Nysai & Thesis Ly	Kevin Schmidke	Nkauj Iab Yang
Jenn Fang	Tsuleng Lyfoung	Mary Seng	See Yang
Mary Froiland	Tam Ma	Jennifer Shieh	Boratha Yeang
Kevin Gamper	Anthony Mam	Ekkarath Sisavatdy	Edward Yeang
Veronica Guzman	Sara Martin	Michael Siv	Nancy Yeang
Nhi Ha	Andrea Matz	Colleen Pelak Smith	Rattana Yeang
Heather Hackman	Irene Matz	Sarya Sok	Henry Yue
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Simone Hang	Dior Nguyen	Pavy Thao Stacey	
Andrea Hermanson	Katelynn Nguyen	Jay W. Stansell	

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Cat Bao Le  
Sharon Stanley-Rea

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IN MEMORY OF NENG THAO



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