

ACRS NEWS

ACRS 
Anniversary
Celebrating Community



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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 have great news to share. The Board of Directors has named Michael Byun as ACRS' next executive director, effective December 3, 2018. I have known Michael and appreciated his leadership for over ten years, and cannot think of a better person to lead ACRS into the future. You will read more about Michael in the story on the next page.

As you may know, last year I announced that I planned to retire on October 27, 2018, when we will celebrate ACRS' 45th anniversary at our gala. However, I will remain executive director until December 2, so that Michael can carry out the thoughtful transition he is engaged in at his current organization, and collaborate with me in our transition at ACRS. I am confident that between us and our great board and staff, ACRS will have a smooth leadership transition.

I am really looking forward to celebrating ACRS' 45th anniversary with you throughout the year. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of our beautiful ACRS facility in the Rainier Valley, and we plan to celebrate with a festive open house this August. If you haven't been able to visit us here, this would be a perfect opportunity. If you have already visited, come see the new artwork, hear stories and party with us at our open house!

This very special year is made more so by our founders, board members, staff, volunteers, and partnering organizations, past and present. I am deeply grateful to Sue Tomita, a key ACRS founder, and to Dave Okimoto and Theresa Fujiwara, two early and long-time ACRS executive directors who, along with Sue and so many others, envisioned and created ACRS and grew it in its first two decades. Dave and Theresa now co-chair the Friends of ACRS steering committee, and Sue and other founders and past board members have joined them, to stand with us in these challenging times for the communities ACRS serves, and to raise visibility and resources for us to do the work we must do, through our social justice mission, health and human services, and collaborative civic engagement activities like the Asian American and Pacific Islander Democracy Initiative. ACRS' social justice mission in all its expressions has never been more critical to the well-being of the communities we serve.

By the time of the October 27 gala celebration, I will have led ACRS, with generations of board members and staff, for 23 years, half of its 45 years. During this time, I have seen a visionary and dynamic organization, deeply rooted in the communities from which it draws its strength, with hundreds of compassionate and skilled staff and volunteers, helping tens of thousands of community members not just to survive but to thrive, to find their voice and

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MEET OUR NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AS OF DECEMBER 3, 2018



annually and providing comprehensive, integrated health and social services, information, and resources to its clients.

Key ASIA initiatives that Michael has led include expansion of workforce and job training programs, services for domestic violence, the launch of coalition-based, statewide civic engagement campaigns and AAPI Legislative Days, and in 2013, the opening of the first-ever federally qualified health center in Ohio focused on serving AAPI immigrant and refugee communities.

ACRS Board President Angelie Chong said “Diane has inspired truly collaborative leadership that strengthens our civil and human rights, and builds power with engagement from staff, clients, community leaders and members. Michael’s experience as a strong local, statewide and national voice with the AAPI community and other marginalized and communities of color will ensure our communities continue to have a strong leader, collaborator and advocate at ACRS.”

Michael has worked for nearly 25 years on health disparities, social justice, and immigrant and refugee issues, with a focus on AAPIs and other underserved communities. In addition to his leadership role at ASIA, he serves on local, state and national boards and advisory committees within the AAPI community. He is board co-chair for National Coalition of Asian Pacific American Community Development, and founding member for the national AIM for Equity, a health justice advocacy organization focused on advocacy and mobilization of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and allies to ensure access to high quality, culturally competent health care. Michael holds a gubernatorial appointment as chair of the Ohio AAPI Advisory Council, and in 2014, along with Narasaki, was appointed by President Barack Obama to the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. He is a 2015 German Marshall Fund Fellow and 2009-10 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellow who received his MPA from the University of Washington.

“I’m humbled and grateful for the opportunity to serve this incredible community and this organization. I want to thank Diane for 23 years of

After 22 years of service to Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) as its executive director, Diane Narasaki announced her retirement in December 2017. She made her announcement a year in advance to ensure a smooth transition, and so she could celebrate our 45th anniversary gala with our community on October 27 before her departure.

After concluding a national search process, the ACRS Board of Directors appointed Michael Byun to be ACRS’ next executive director, effective December 3, 2018. Byun is currently the chief executive officer for Ohio’s largest health and social services agency serving Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and other immigrant and refugee communities.

Michael is a native Washingtonian and returns to the Pacific Northwest following 15 years of outstanding leadership at Asian Services in Action (ASIA), Inc. The leading health and social services organization for Ohio’s AAPI community, ASIA is also an influential voice for the community, serving over 58,000 people

▪ *Continues on page 22* |

LETTER TO ACRS COMMUNITY

From David Okimoto, Founding Board Member and Past Executive Director of ACRS

The late '60s and early '70s were a time of great social change. Protests against the war in Vietnam, the emergence of the women's movement and the growing expansion of the civil rights movement led by the black community dominated the political landscape. These efforts, led by students, took over the streets and ultimately shut down the freeway. In the Asian community, activism emerged as well. Locally, the potential infringement of the King Dome on the International District mobilized the Asian community to fight the development and make our case known to the powers that be. We marched in the streets and right into King County Executive John Spellman's office.

Out of that social activism ACRS was born. It was fueled by young college students, and in particular, social work students from the UW School of Social Work. The all-volunteer effort was led by elders in the Asian community like Dr. Min Masuda from the UW, Professor Anthony

Ishisaka from the School of Social Work and Dr. Lindberg Sata, director of Harborview Community Mental Health Center. And of course, Bob Santos of Interlm took us under his wing and guided us throughout our developmental years.

We opened our doors for service one day a week in 1973 at Blaine Memorial United Methodist Church with the support of the congregation and Reverend Miyake. At the time Asians were considered to be the "model minority" because we didn't make waves and did not show up in crime statistics or other data points that suggested problems. That changed in the early '70s when there was an epidemic of drug overdoses in the Asian community primarily attributed to heroin and barbiturate use. The model minority image started to crack. Similarly, leaders in the mental health field like Dr. Sata were perplexed that Asians were not seeking mental health care.

Dave Okimoto tabling on behalf of ACRS.

Photo from ACRS archives.



We knew there were numerous Asian clients in state institutions, many of whom could not be released into the community because of a lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate care. We believed that if we provided mental health care that was culturally sensitive and spoken in the native language, that people would come. And they did. In that first year we served 70 clients.

ACRS has thrived since those early years, now serving a multitude of ethnic groups in dozens of languages. It has continued its emphasis on social justice as a voice for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community and other communities of color. Of special note is ACRS' shared leadership in creating broad community collaborations which advocate for social justice. The Minority Executive Directors Coalition and Asian Pacific Islander Coalition are notable examples.

In November 2016, the world changed for many of us when the unthinkable happened, bringing a new administration with policies that could not be more anathema to the middle class, poor people, people of color, women and refugees and immigrants. D.C. is a long distance, but there are things we can do at home to fight these heinous attacks on our communities. That's why we restarted "Friends of ACRS." ACRS does things I could not do alone. They advocate for all of us, they connect with key partners, and they do the background research.

That's why so many of us, from Theresa Fujiwara and me, to Sue Tomita, Selina Chow, Peter Tsai, Marcia Fujimoto, David Della, Rita Brogan and Emma Catague have re-engaged with fierce conviction. We need your help to mobilize the resources to fight the craziness emanating from D.C. Please join the Friends of ACRS as an advocate, volunteer or donor. We need all the help we can get. ■



To join the Friends of ACRS contact Candace Inagi at candacei@acrs.org.

Local advocates join Uncle Bob Santos in taking to the streets to protect the Chinatown-International District.

Photo by Eugene Tagawa.







Photos of ACRS and its community across 45 years.

Photos from ACRS archives.

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

As our country navigates dangerous times, all eyes are on the mid-term elections. There is much at stake for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), the nation's fastest growing communities. Here are just a few issues that disproportionately affect our community.

Immigration

Asia sends more immigrants here than any other region of the world. Ninety percent of AAPIs are immigrants, refugees, or their children. Policies which greatly restrict entry of refugees and immigrants and which dramatically increase detentions and deportations, are already increasing family separations for years, if not forever.

The Supreme Court will hear challenges to the President's DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) rescission soon. Whether DACA recipients, eligible undocumented immigrants who were brought here by their parents as children, will be allowed to stay or will be deported, is an issue thousands of AAPI DACA recipients face along with 700,000 young people of other backgrounds.

Children of H1B visa workers, who grow up here and become adults before their parents can receive green cards or legal permanent residency, also face the prospect of having to leave and return to a virtually foreign country.

AAPI immigrants and refugees who committed crimes, served their time, and later became upstanding community members, are now being ripped from their families and deported in record numbers.

Although the President's "Muslim Ban" does not affect AAPI immigrants and refugees directly, it fans Islamophobia, which does affect AAPI Muslims and Sikhs, who are often mistaken for Muslims. Both experience hate speech, hate crimes and violence.

The stakes for immigration reform that could benefit and protect our community could not be higher in the mid-term elections.

Census

The Commerce Department proposed that a citizenship question be added to the 2020 Census form. The Constitution requires a count of all residents, not an identification of citizenship status. If this question is included, many immigrants, refugees, and their family members will fear to participate. The Census is used to apportion the number of Congressional representatives states have, and to distribute over \$600 billion in federal funds for schools, hospitals, roads, services and other vital purposes. AAPIs have been undercounted in the past. Many face barriers of language and culture, and because the Census will be collected primarily online, of digital literacy, to participation. Adding a citizenship question will suppress our community's participation and visibility, and we will suffer the consequences, locally and nationally, as we remain an undercounted and under-resourced population. Much is at stake for the ten years following the 2020 Census.

Environment

Climate change threatens Pacific Island families and nations, which are losing their land to rising seas. Climate change is linked to increased frequency and severity of life threatening typhoons, flooding, drought, and loss of coastlines in Asia. Here at home, communities of color, including AAPIs, experience the worst impacts of carbon pollution, and have higher rates of respiratory diseases and worse health in the most polluted neighborhoods. This is why we support Initiative 1631, which will ensure that corporate polluters pay their fair share in cleaning up their pollution. It will invest in communities most affected by pollution, and generate clean energy jobs. There is much at stake for the planet in the mid-term elections.

Our AAPI communities are a swing vote and can make the difference in these critical elections on these crucial issues. If you are eligible, register, and if you are registered, please vote! ■



If you can help register voters, help with ballot parties, or help get out the vote, please contact our Civic Engagement Program at (206) 774-2436.

SOCIAL WORK IS IN MY DNA *by Felicita Irigon*

I consider social work an important part of my DNA. From my growing up in the Philippines to immigrating to the United States, I have found meaning in helping others. It is also part of my religious upbringing to be of service to others rather than putting my needs first. As a product of the 1960s and 1970s, I have dedicated myself to peace and social justice. During this journey, I was not alone. There were many people who mentored me and showed me that what they did for others gave meaning to their lives and helped those they were serving. There were Drs. Min Masuda and Joe Okimoto, Professors Chiz Norton and Tony Ishisaka, social workers Sue Tomita and Ike Ikeda, to name just a few. They were instrumental in making ACRS into a viable community-based organization providing culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible mental health services to Seattle's Asian and Pacific Islander community. I learned a lot from them on what social work was all about, and how transformative it is both for the clients and the community. It gave me the opportunity to use my social work skills that were enhanced with being bilingual and bicultural to serve clients at ACRS.

Speaking of ACRS, I pride myself in being part of its beginning. I was a graduate student in the UW School of Social Work when a fellow student, Apolonio Buyagawan, spoke with Professor Chiz Norton about mental health services specifically serving Asians in Los Angeles. He wondered why there weren't such services in Seattle and consequently, conversations about having one in Seattle began. Gil Hirabayashi and Viqui Claravall were among those in my class that took an active interest in it, and later we were among the early volunteers to provide mental health services to Asian clients at Blaine Memorial United Methodist Church. Others stepped to the fore and provided professional guidance and organizational structure to what we were doing. What ACRS is today, it owes to the pioneering efforts of Drs. Min Masuda and Joe Okimoto, Professors Chiz Norton

and Tony Ishisaka, social workers Sue Tomita and Ike Ikeda, and its many dedicated volunteers. Blaine was instrumental in incubating ACRS before it became a standalone community based organization. All of them gave unselfishly to our community and did so with an open heart.

If you're in it for the money, social work isn't for you. I never got rich being a social worker, but I found it so rewarding in many ways. I was able to use my Filipino language and my culture to provide meaningful and effective mental health services to clients I served. I was also part of a movement that empowers our community to do for ourselves what others would not do for us. I love social work and it is part of my DNA. ■



From left to right: Viqui Claravall, Felicita Irigon and Gil Hirabayashi.

Photo by Felicita Irigon.

WHY I WALK FOR RICE by Aki Shibuya

When I moved to Seattle a little over a year ago, I made a commitment to find opportunities to engage with and get to know my new community. Local connections led me to ACRS around the time the organization was starting work on its annual *Walk for Rice*. Intrigued, I joined the 2017 event planning committee, and soon found myself sitting next to the legendary Herb Tsuchiya, one of the co-founders of the *Walk*. I later learned that he was legendary not only for his service to the Seattle Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, but also for his homemade castella cake.

Herb started *Walk for Rice* with his late wife, Bertha Lung Tsuchiya, and friend, Sam Mitsui, about 28 years ago after they were introduced to ACRS. While observing the lines at the ACRS Food Bank in the Chinatown-International District, they felt compassion for the young children and elderly they met there and noticed that there were no donations of rice or other staples found in Asian and Pacific

Islander diets. Herb, Bertha and Sam decided a walkathon would get people to learn about ACRS while also raising money to buy rice and nutritious food for the ACRS Food Bank to distribute.

To be honest, hunger was not an issue I originally thought affected the AAPI community much. For many reasons – be it the lack of disaggregated data, the permeation of the model minority myth in the public’s understanding of AAPIs, or the shame and frustration it brings – hunger remains a hidden need that is detrimental to our communities and limiting our collective potential to thrive and prosper. Yet, the need for food banks continues to grow year by year, with rising rents, stifled government benefits and increased food prices. The interconnectedness of poverty and health makes hunger a critical issue in need of attention.

Fortunately, this sense of urgency has helped bring people together to make this grassroots event a community event in its truest form; it is

Aki Shibuya (right) with her friend Jeremy Sánchez at Aki’s first Walk for Rice.

Photo by Kristen Miyake.



of the people, for the people and by the people. I marveled at the skills and connections my fellow committee members brought to last year's *Walk for Rice* organizing committee, leveraging professional and personal resources and relationships to secure partnerships for the *Walk*. Karaoke nights, raffles and bake sales dotted the calendar, with each event bringing more awareness and funds to ACRS and its food bank. When the big day finally arrived, I remember swelling with pride as I watched the many runners and walkers whiz by me around Seward Park, all doing their part in this fight against hunger. We celebrated our collective achievements with music, performances, laughter and lots of great food.

Seeing that many people converge with such hope and joy over a somber topic, while making a tangible, collective impact on the community made me understand the *Walk's* success over the years, and excited for future ones to come. We're in the midst of planning for this year's *Walk* and I am inspired and

energized by the new ideas for entertainment, outreach and partnerships flowing in the room.

We hope to draw more people than before to this year's *Walk for Rice* – but we can't do it without your help! Sign up for the *Walk* online at www.walkforrice.org and share the news with your close networks. Gather friends and make teams, and see who can out-fundraise each other. Attend our pre-*Walk* events, or host your own. Then, on Saturday, June 30, join us at Seward Park for a great day of community building and festivities. Together, we can step closer to winning the fight against hunger, and ensuring that everyone in our community has access to healthy food so that they can live to their greatest potential. ■



ACRS' 28th annual

WALK FOR RICE

every grain counts

SATURDAY | 8^{AM} – 1^{PM}

JUNE 30, 2018

Seward Park • Seattle, WA



walkforrice.org



CELEBRATE COMMUNITY AT ACRS *by Sam Him*

As of April 2018, I have been with ACRS for 24 years. You may be wondering why I have chosen to stay with one agency for all this time. ACRS' mission aligns with my own beliefs and values. We work to promote social justice and the well-being and empowerment of Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and other underserved communities, including immigrants, refugees and American-born. It is amazing that we have staff and volunteers from all over Asia and other continents working together under one roof. It has been my greatest pleasure and privilege to assist our community members with reaching their personal and professional goals. I am part of their lives and they are part of mine.

When I started working at ACRS in 1994, I spent four years with our Children, Youth and Families program as a clinical case manager working with at-risk youth and their families. In 1998, I moved into our Employment & Training program, where I've been working with job seekers to help them gain employment and on the path to financial self-sufficiency. In addition to helping them get formal skills training at different colleges, I assist them with their resumes, cover letters, thank you letters, applying for jobs online, using different job search strategies, and gaining soft skills like navigating interpersonal relationships. I sometimes work with people who first come to see me because they are struggling to put food on the table for their families and with meeting other basic needs before they can get even get a job.

I have worked with numerous clients through the years. Some have very limited English, others lack relevant work experience and skills, and many more, especially those from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

I remember the clients who went through Certified Nursing Assistant training at North Seattle College and later got jobs as CNAs. They shared: "I will be forever grateful." "Thank you for your support, encouragement and all that you have taught us." "You work so hard for us. Thank you is not enough."

Other clients who completed office work training at Seattle Vocational Institute and secured job as office or administrative assistants said, "You are such an inspiration to me, as am sure you are to many others. Thank you for your support, time, and consideration," and "Thank you for the chance you gave to my life here in USA. It is meaningful to me and people who have less opportunity. I hope one day when I am [successful] and can go on track to my career, I can help ACRS somehow."

I love hearing these stories of success and the work that I do here at ACRS has been very rewarding personally and professionally. I am in a position to help people every day. If you want to make a positive difference in your own life and for others every day, please consider coming to work at ACRS, volunteering your time or making a gift to support our work. Together, we can accomplish more. ■

Sam Him (center), along with ACRS staff at a past gala.

Photo from ACRS archives.



WHEN PEOPLE COME TOGETHER by Ling Chua, LMFT



THERAPY ASSOCIATES

Forty-five years ago, a group of volunteers came together in Seattle wanting to fill a gap for mental health services in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. In a pre-Internet era, they spread the word mostly through what must now seem like ancient means: word of mouth.

From a simple mental health center operating out of a borrowed classroom, ACRS today has become a fully-fledged social justice agency with robust programs in mental health and social services, and events and activities that cater not just to the AAPI community, but to any person in need of support. You can watch some short videos about how ACRS came to be and what we do on our website at www.acrs.org/acrs45.

Today, the Internet has given us far more effective tools to seek out and connect with other people. Social organization facilitated by media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have challenged and toppled authoritarian regimes in other countries. Closer to home, social media gave momentum to movements that urgently call on all of us to end injustice and violence in our society. People no longer need to suffer in silence: African Americans found solidarity in Black Lives Matter, while victims of sexual assault found their voice in the #MeToo movement. As I write, high school students in Florida are leading a nationwide movement to increase gun control via #NeverAgain.

In my work as a therapist, I have witnessed on many occasions the power of community. Depressed clients find hope in life when they rediscover a sense of belonging by reconnecting with their family. Socially anxious individuals learn by joining a hobby group that people around them are not as threatening as they had thought. People who

experienced unspeakable trauma start to heal when they share their stories in a therapeutic group.

When people come together, what matters is not just the constellation of skills and traits of the individuals; the relationships that form empower everyone. The whole is certainly greater than the sum of its parts.

Bonds form not only when people are in physical proximity, but also when they share the same virtual space. Social media can be a great tool for getting people to talk about mental health, thereby reducing stigma around mental illness. This is crucial in AAPI communities, where people tend not to talk about their problems until they reach crisis levels.

Start by saying something. When you speak up, you are creating awareness. You are telling others they can reach out for help and there is hope for recovery. Share your own experiences with anxiety or grief. Post about how someone you know overcame depression (with their permission). "Like" a blog or article about the hidden eating disorders among high school students. Tweet a fact you just learned about the prevalence of substance abuse and add #MentalHealth.

Let's not wait for another crisis in the community to start talking about what needs to change. Together, we can reach out. We can create change. ■



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

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

CITIZENSHIP: THE LAST DEFENSE

According to the 2014 American Community Survey, 75,000 foreign-born residents in King County are eligible to naturalize, but have not done so. Now, more than ever, ACRS' citizenship program and our partners at the city and state level are encouraging those who are eligible to naturalize.

The past year has been difficult for immigrants and refugees in the United States. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and hate crimes against people perceived to be "foreign-born" are on the rise. Proposed changes to immigration policy, the possible elimination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and ending the diversity lottery and family-based immigration preferences have left many wondering if immigrants are currently welcome in the United States. Detentions and deportations are on the rise—even among green card holders with minor criminal offenses. What kind of message is being sent when U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services decides to remove the phrase "nation of immigrants" from its mission statement?

Those who are eligible to naturalize must take steps now to become U.S. citizens. The benefits of citizenship are clear—it offers iron-clad protection from the threat of detention or deportation,

whereas those with legal permanent resident status (i.e., green card holders) cannot be assured of that same protection.

On February 3, 2018, ACRS and many other community-based organizations partnered with the City of Seattle to offer a citizenship workshop called Seattle United for Immigrants and Refugees. Together, we served over 1,000 people who were eager to naturalize or receive one-on-one consultation with an immigration attorney to determine if they have a path to citizenship. Along with staff from the City, ACRS, and many other agencies, 800 volunteers from the region were eager to show their support for immigrants and refugees during these times. The feeling at the event was one of solidarity, and participants were well aware of the fact that becoming a U.S. citizen now, if possible, has never been more important.

While there will not be another large workshop in Seattle this year, there will be smaller workshops throughout the city. ACRS will continue to offer our bi-weekly walk-in clinic for eligible green card holders. Please contact ACRS at (206) 695-7600 for more information on our clinic schedule. ■

More than 1,000 people received help at February's Seattle United for Immigrants and Refugees event.

Photo by Alan Alabastro Photography.



THANK YOU DONORS!

ACRS is only able to offer hope and opportunity to thousands across our region with support from our donors. Big thanks to the individuals and organizations below for making a gift between November 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018!

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TURNING 10: A HOME FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Imagine: you're standing at the top of the Herb & Bertha Tsuchiya Meditation Garden. You see a group of Mien women walking toward ACRS from the 106 bus stop on Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. They each carry a bag of colorful embroidery thread, needles and fabric. They are on their way to the art room to join ACRS' Healing Stitch program. In that same room later that afternoon, paint brushes, a rainbow palette of paints, colorful bits of paper, stretches of canvas, and other art media and implements will be spread throughout the room and in the hands of artists of varying skills and backgrounds who suffer from chronic mental illness. They gather as part of a social support group where each of them can find safety to explore feelings, thoughts and memories through the healing power of art in our Art Therapy program.

Walk around the corner and enter the building through the sliding doors at our south entrance and you will encounter a group of Korean seniors happily gathering in the main lobby. They have

just completed the trek from Federal Way by van to participate at Club Bamboo, one of ACRS' six senior ethnic lunch programs. Before sitting down for lunch, they will work up their appetites with tai chi, yoga and line dancing. As they get off the elevator to the first floor, they pass a line of staff and visitors waiting to buy a cup of coffee or a chai latte from Café Hope, the client-run espresso cart.

You choose to take the main stairwell down and find yourself behind a smartly-dressed couple walking past the Gilded Bowl Column (designed by artist Horatio Law and featuring bowls painted by clients, staff and volunteers spanning our three-story atrium) on their way to a counseling room for their weekly marriage counseling session. They speak English and can afford to pay the fees elsewhere. Still, they choose to work with ACRS Therapy Associates because their counselor understands the cross-cultural dynamics of a biracial marriage.

ACRS headquarters is nestled in Seattle's Rainier Valley.

Photo by Hyunchul Luke Jung.



Walking along the first floor lobby, you pass a smiling Ethiopian immigrant. He smiles because his case manager just helped him complete an online job application with one of ACRS' employer partners in the computer lab. A few weeks ago, he didn't know how to turn on a computer. Thanks to a digital literacy class sponsored by Comcast, he learned the basic computer skills he needed to find an entry-level job.

As you peer into a large classroom, you can see a mixture of Asian, Pacific Islander, East African and Latino immigrants focusing intently on their instructor as she asks a question – one of 150 questions on a civics test that they will need to pass in order to become a U.S. citizen.

As we get closer to the Safeco Activity Center, the delicious aroma of bibimbap emanates from the Club Bamboo kitchen. Executive Chef Salima is sautéing strips of beef, while one her assistants fries eggs and another prepares the steamed greens and kimchi that will garnish this delicious Korean rice dish.

After lunch the tables and chairs will be cleared away to make room for the basketball game that will begin in the late afternoon, when youth from nearby middle and high schools drop-in for our after school programs. Some will go to the nearby Youth Activity Room to talk about the questions they will ask their grandparents for the video they will film to document their families' refugee history.

These are just a few examples of the many wonderful activities and services that take place at ACRS on any given day, just as we envisioned they would ten years ago when we opened the doors to our current home in the Rainier Valley. With strong community support, our building allows ACRS to continue to fulfill the promise of providing high quality, culturally competent services to the growing Asian American, Pacific Islander and other immigrant and refugee communities in need. ■



Come celebrate ACRS' building's tenth anniversary on August 23, 2018. RSVP at events@acrs.org.

ACRS' holistic approach to health and well-being incorporates Western and traditional medicine, wellness groups, employment programs, nutrition and more.

Photo by Amanda Roth.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK *(CONT.)*

▪ *Continued from pg. 2* ▪

strength, to help and heal others, and to build a more just and compassionate world together. Daily, we cross lines of ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, race, gender and class, and embrace the full humanity of everyone we serve, whether American born, refugee or immigrant, documented or undocumented, young or old.

I have had the amazing good fortune to have been a part of this collective work, and to see its heartwarming results. We are living in perilous times, but what I see at ACRS, and what I see in others who share our values and willingness to act on them, here, across the nation, and around

the world, is a never ending source of hope and inspiration. I thank everyone at ACRS for allowing me to have been a part of it, and I thank you, for making ACRS possible through your support. I look forward to seeing you at the Walk for Rice, our open house, and our 45th anniversary gala, one last time, as ACRS' executive director! ■

Sincerely,



Diane Narasaki
Executive Director

MEET OUR NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *(CONT.)*

AS OF DECEMBER 3, 2018

▪ *Continued from pg. 3* ▪

amazing service as she hands over the responsibilities to me in December. Her visionary and strategic leadership of the organization means I have inherited a strong, influential and mighty institution that will continue our community's important and vital work," said Michael.

Looking ahead, Michael continued, "We are at a time of great challenge unlike anything we've seen before. Now, more than ever, we must work together to uphold

values of equity, fairness, and social justice. We are also confronted with a dynamic shifting landscape for health and social services where ACRS is well positioned as it continues to innovate to be community responsive. It is in the organization's DNA. I look forward to working with ACRS staff, board of directors, volunteers, donors and other community allies as we look towards the future." ■



ACRS 
Anniversary Gala
 Celebrating Community

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2018

Hyatt Regency Bellevue
 Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Purchase tickets at:
acrs.org/gala

Show your love for ACRS by wearing red.

10.27.18



ACRS OPEN HOUSE

Celebrating our 10th year building anniversary!

8.23.18



THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2018

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