



Lao Family Community Development

2325 E. 12th Street, Oakland, CA 94601

Tel: (510) 533-8850, Fax: (510) 533-1516

August 19, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Mary Fuller

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Lead Day of Learning and Engagement for Peers and Parents *Southeast Asian Youth Leadership Empowerment Conference*

OAKLAND- Sixteen youth from Lao Family Community Development, Inc.'s Summer Youth Employment Program are organizing a free all-day conference that will take place on August 25, 2009 at the Oakland Masonic Center in Oakland. This 14th annual *Southeast Asian Youth Leadership Empowerment Conference's* theme is "Today a follower, tomorrow a leader" and will feature Supervisor Keith Carson from the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and Councilmember Pat Kernighan from the Oakland City Council as keynote speakers. The organizers are targeting youth ages 14 – 24 and their parents with a series workshops exploring critical issues in the local community including sex education, legal rights, racism and violence, and drug and alcohol abuse. There will also be a career panel to show youth the diversity of employment opportunities open to them.

Lao Family's Youth Director Alex Banh says that the conference is designed give participants from the Summer Youth Employment Program a way to develop new skills through work that benefits their peers. "All of our youth have plenty to say when it comes to describing the violence and poverty that surrounds them, but are at a loss for words when you ask them about solutions. This conference aims to empower the youth with both knowledge and skills to make positive change in their communities."

The youth are organizing the conference as their work assignment for the Summer Youth Employment Program. The goal of the program is to place low-income, immigrant and refugee youth in summer jobs to help them gain valuable employment experience so they can grow to become self-sufficient adults. Over 40% of the programs youth are from refugee families who speak little or no English. Few, if any, have parents who graduated from high school, let alone college. Half of the youth have never held jobs before the program, so Lao Family offers job-readiness workshops and coaching to help the teens access and navigate the workplace. Afterwards, they are placed in internships or jobs at one of 40 worksites such as the Community Rejuvenation Project, Asian Health Services, and Peralta Hacienda Historic Park.

But the program goes beyond basic job skills. Amy Lee said when asked about her experience in the program: "I learned a lot about leadership this summer. I learned about the importance of communication, personal responsibility, and teamwork. Teamwork is the most important because when I'm out of ideas, I can count on others to help out."

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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

Date & Time: August 25, 2009, 9:00am – 4:00pm

Location: Masonic Center, 3903 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611-5674

To Register: Participants should pre-register with Alex Banh at abanh@laofamilynet.org or 510-533-8850

Press RSVP: To attend the conference and pre-arrange interviews please email Mary Fuller at mfuller@laofamilynet.org or call 510-533-8850.

Agenda:

8:30am	9:00am	Breakfast & registration	
9:00am	9:40am	Opening remarks, intro and keynote speakers	Jidan Koon, Arthur Savangsy, Chaosarn Chao, Pat Kernighan, and Keith Carson
9:50am	10:40am	Workshop Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex Ed –David Pheng • CSU Vs. UC –REACH • Know your rights! – Greg Tanaka, API Legal Outreach
10:50	11:40	Workshop Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferring -College Of Alameda • Violence /Racism –Professor Baham • Drugs/Alcohol – REACH
11:50am	12:25pm	Lunch	
12:25pm	1:25pm	Entertainment	Open Mic and Raffles
1:35pm	2:40pm	Workshop Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Men’s Collectives - Serve the People • Young Women’s Collectives – Lao Family Interns
2:50pm	3:25pm	Workshop Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Panel: Oakland Fire Dept, Oakland Tribune columnist, teacher, artist, community organizer, spoken word artist, and attorney
3:35pm	3:45pm	Closing & Recognition	

Sponsors:



Lao Family Community
Development



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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES:

Jidan Koon (Opening remarks)

I'm a second generation Chinese American born in San Francisco and raised in Berkeley. I've been involved in starting mentoring, youth leadership, and tutoring programs since going to college at UC Berkeley. I also went to graduate school for public policy and urban planning at Princeton. I ran a youth center at Skyline High School and loved it! Now I work with all kinds of groups of youth as well as adults to help them plan programs, campaigns, and other processes. I am dedicated to being a kind, brave, loyal, and honest person in my community. What that means is that I do what I can to help others because I know that my freedom and happiness (and that of my future children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren) depends on the well being of my family, friends, community, and world. I'm here because my well being depends on your well being! Thank you for being involved in leadership, service, and making things better.

Arthur Savangsy (Opening remarks)

I am a grandson of an anti-communist Laotian soldier, and a hardworking Laotian woman. I am born in Sacramento, California and I lived in Ukiah, Vallejo, and recently near Berkeley. I spent my early teenage years living in group homes and the streets of South Sacramento at the age 13 to 15. In the summer of 2005, I was sent to Ukiah to live in a group home for 2 years (2005-2007). I joined the Bay when I was accepted into a foster home in Vallejo where I spent 2 years as a Southeast Asian Foster Youth. With these experiences I have grown stronger as a person, a youth, and a Laotian American. I used my struggle, pain, and hardship to be involved with the Richmond/Oakland community. I have participated in many educational programs such as SASC SI, a summer program held by UC Berkeley's Southeast Asian Student Coalition in the summer of 2008. I had gained inspiration from the people and the programs I have been a part of, so with the inspiration I do community organizing as my teenage hobby. I am just a Laotian child from poverty, trying to hold peace in my community with the help of friends. I use Hip Hop as a way to express, voice, and represent my soul. I stand behind companionship, love, unity, friendship, peace and kindness. I feel it is my duty to stop this war with one another, so we can stop the war against us. I hope the best for everyone and good luck with everything. Peace.

Diane Chang (Transferring & Community College)

Diane Wu Chang is a Career and College Counselor with special interest in working with Asian Pacific Americans (APA). With over 12 years work experience in UC, CSU and California Community Colleges, Diane has an in depth understanding of the California higher education system. She obtained a BA in Psychology from UC Berkeley and an MS in Counseling from San Francisco State University. Her research and work interests have focused on APA and other minority groups in career development and higher education. Diane currently works at College of Alameda as a Counselor/Coordinator for the Asian Pacific American Student Success (APASS) Program to support academic advancement of APA students.

David Pheng (Sex Education)

I am currently working for the Asian Health Service - Youth Program as Community Health Advocate. I'm Khmer. I'm a health counselor. And I love it. After graduating from UC Santa Cruz, I stuck to my passion: working with youth. Afterwards, I found I could move a crowd with laughter and figured I'm responsible for being positive, Southeast Asian, and a male role model... or something close to it.

Seng So (Young Men's Collective)

In the 1980's my parents fled the Khmer genocide; past land mines, over rivers, across jungles, through death and despair. They found refuge in Thailand. And in 1985, in the mud and starvation of the refugee camps I was born. In 1989, my parents had reached America's shores settling in the Bay Area. It is from this history- the struggles and sacrifices of my ancestors, the lives my parents gave up to reach America and the childhoods we lived without knowing- that paves my path today. With that said, I grew up most of my life in Hayward, California. I attended college at UCLA. I received my Bachelor's degree in Asian American Studies at UCLA and now I work in Oakland, California as a youth organizer for Youth Together. Youth Together addresses issues related to educational equity and social justice, developing youth as organizers in order to make positive impacts in and outside their school communities. Alongside Youth Together, I am also a part of Serve the People, a grassroots project serving the Southeast Asian community in order to heal and struggle for liberation.



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ABOUT LAO FAMILY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Founded in 1980, Lao Family Community Development, Inc. (LFCD) assists community members to achieve long-term financial and social self-sufficiency. We encourage our community members to establish goals, believe in themselves, and become contributing members of society. Lao Family annually serves over 10,000 diverse refugee, immigrant, and low-income U.S. born individuals and families with housing education, employment counseling, financial literacy, youth development, senior care and family support services. We have offices in Oakland, Sacramento, and San Pablo. Our work is made possible by government grants and contracts, as well as contributions from foundations, corporations, and individual donors. For more information, please view www.laofamilynet.org.

ABOUT WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) YOUTH PROGRAM

Lao Family has served youth for 26 years in Alameda and Contra Costa County. Lao Family runs a year-round program focused on leadership development and a summer program focused on career development. The summer program is currently working with 150 youth aged 14-24 from Southeast Asian refugee, asylee, and immigrant families. Youth in the program receive case-management, group workshops, and connection to education, career training, and youth leadership skills. They are placed into subsidized summer positions in the arts, hospitality, retail services, construction, façade improvement and tenant improvement of commercial business in blighted areas in the Coliseum and Central City East Redevelopment areas. Through this program, participants emerge with new job skills and work experience. This year, 100% of the 35 of high school senior's in Lao Family's year-round youth program went on to higher education, including colleges such as UC Davis and Stanford.