



Lao Family Community Development

6901 Stockton Blvd., Suite 340, Sacramento, CA 95823

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southeast Asian Youth Empowerment Symposium

Youth Lead Day of Learning and Engagement for Peers and their Parents

SACRAMENTO- Three youth from Lao Family Community Development, Inc.'s Summer Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program are organizing a free all-day conference that will take place on August 20, 2009 at Holiday Villa in Sacramento. This first annual *Southeast Asian Youth Empowerment Symposium's* theme is "Building Leaders" and will feature Supervisor Don Nottoli from County of Sacramento Board of Supervisors and councilmember Kevin McCarty from the Sacramento City Council as keynote speakers. The organizers are targeting youth ages 14 – 21 and their parents with three workshops exploring critical issues in the local community. School Board Member Lee Yang will talk about accessing **higher education**, Detective John Fan of the Sacramento Police Department will discuss **gangs and violence prevention**, and a team of youth will lead a discussion about **safe sex and teen pregnancy**.

Lao Family's Youth Coordinator Ty Vue says that the Symposium was conceived of as a way for participants from the WIA Youth program to use their new skills and confidence to benefit their peers. "When a lot of the youth start our program, they are very quiet and don't speak up. I tell them, 'Silence is for one, knowledge is for all' and if they have knowledge, they need to share it. It's really amazing to see them find their voice."

The three youth organizing the Symposium are doing it as their work assignment for the WIA Youth 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 60% 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 at one of 10 worksites for internships or jobs at places like the Boys and Girls Club and Hmong Women Heritage Association.

But the program goes beyond basic job skills. "We motivate youth to become better people- to become leaders in the community even after they graduate from the summer youth program," says Vue. That is why the Symposium workshops are all designed to get youth thinking about and engaged in addresses important issues facing them and their communities. Lao Family's CEO Chaosarn Chao notes: "The youth who are organizing the Symposium are gaining valuable work experience, but they are doing it in a way that has larger positive impact on the community of Sacramento."

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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

Location:

Holiday Villa
7007 S Land Park Dr
Sacramento, CA 95831-3137

Agenda:

From	To	Description	Speaker
9:00am	10:00am	Registration	
10:00am	10:15am	Welcome	Chaosarn Chao/ Kathy
10:15am	10:30am	Keynote 1:	Supervisor Don Nottoli
10:30am	11:00am	Sponsors	Census 2010 & Wells Fargo
11:00am	12:00pm	Workshop 1: Higher Education	School Board Member Lee Yang & Dr. Chiem-Seng Yaangh
12:00pm	1:00pm	Lunch	
1:00pm	1:10pm	Keynote 2:	Councilmember Kevin McCarty
1:10pm	2:10pm	Workshop 2: Gangs and Violence Prevention	Detective John Fan of the Sacramento Police Department
2:10pm	3:10pm	Workshop 3: Safe Sex Education and Pregnancy Prevention	WIA Youth presenters and Women Escaping A Violent Environment (WEAVE).
3:10pm	3:30pm	Closing Remarks	

To Register:

Participants should pre-register with Thai Vue at tvue@laofamilynet.org or 916.393.7501

Press RSVP:

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

Sponsors:



Lao Family
Community
Development



Sacramento
Employment and
Training Agency



Sacramento
Works



United States
Census 2010



Wells Fargo



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Speaker biographies:

Detective John Fan became a police officer in 2002, starting as a patrol officer and later specializing in the investigation of gang-related crimes. During his years on patrol, Fan was involved in the arrests of at least 50 validated gang members, and has spoken with hundreds of gang members about their lifestyle, customs, crimes and other activities. He has been an instructor at the Sacramento Police Academy on the topics of Gang Awareness and Gang Investigations since November of 2006 and he is a member of United Hmong, Mien and Lao Communities Against Gang Violence Taskforce, a group of local law enforcement agencies and community based organizations that meet monthly to deal with street gangs and gang violence suppression strategies. Fan graduated from the from California State University of Sacramento with a degree in Criminal Justice.

Councilmember Kevin McCarty was first elected to the Sacramento City Council in 2004 and serves residents in Southeast Sacramento's District 6. McCarty has focused on a variety of policy areas including: expanding after-school and youth programs, spearheading partnerships with local schools, fostering sustainability and improving air quality, promoting safe neighborhoods and housing, and curbing gun violence. Outside of his community work, McCarty serves as the legislative advocate for Preschool California, a statewide non-profit organization working to expand access to quality preschool programs. A longtime Democratic Party activist, McCarty was awarded the prestigious John F. Kennedy Jr. award for outstanding public service at the 2006 State Democratic Party Convention, and received the 2007 Sacramento County Democratic Party Hometown Hero Award. Raised in Sacramento, Kevin attended American River College, studied political science at CSU Long Beach and public policy and administration at CSU Sacramento.

Dr. Chiem-Seng Yaangh has 18 years of experience working in public institutions and private organizations where he has provided direct services to children, youth, and families. Currently, Dr. Yaangh works for Sacramento City Unified School District providing educational and social service programs. He also has a consulting company specializing in sociocultural and educational services, values-based management, and organizational development. Dr. Yaangh has a PhD in Education from UC Davis School of Education where he researched student achievement, immigrant adaptation in school, variation in Asian educational achievement, and high achieving Mien students. He is author of *Crossing a New Sea: A Study of the First Generation of Iu-Mien College Graduates*. Dr. Yaangh is a life-long Community Activist and has served in leadership positions in the United Iu-Mien Community, Inc., United Hmong, Mien, and Lao Community Against Gang Violence, and founded the annual Iu-Mien Student Conference for middle and high school students among others.

Lee Yang was five years old when his family fled Laos at the end of the Vietnam War. He came to the United States where he started 4th grade knowing only the English words, "I don't know." Yang went on to become the first Hmong school principal in the United States. Today he is the Director of the Multilingual/Multicultural & Equity, Access and Achievement Department where he supervises over 20 employees. Under his leadership, his team delivers educational programs to over 12,000 ESL students. He believes education is the best way to achieving success and to grow one's knowledge and skills.



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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 Sacramento, Oakland, 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 been serving youth for 26 years in Alameda and Contra Costa County. This year, 100% of Oakland's WIA Youth program seniors went on to higher education, including colleges such as UC Davis and Stanford. Lao Family brought this experience to Sacramento for the first time in 2008 with the WIA Youth Program. Fifty youth from diverse backgrounds are participating in the 2009 program in Sacramento where they have received life skills training, occupational training, academic tutoring, college preparation, and summer job placement at one of 10 worksites. The youth come from low-income Southeast Asian and African American families. Approximately 60% of the youth come from refugee families and collectively speak six languages: Hmong, Lao, Mien, Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. The program is funded by the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency with Workforce Investment Act funds.