

SSG NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

SSG RELEASES 2021 COMMUNITY REPORT

After much anticipation and planning, SSG was proud to release a new publication called 'Building and Sustaining Communities - 2021 Community Report' in March 2022 as part of SSG's 70th Anniversary year.

The 2021 Community Report was created in partnership with Nakatomi & Associates, a well-established PR communications group known for their work with nonprofit organizations and others.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Executive Director Herb Hatanaka reflected on the ongoing need to strengthen organizational brand, internal culture, communications and organizational capacity across the breadth of an agency like SSG.

As the pandemic continued with relentless ebb and flow, it became more obvious that the Community Report needed to capture the real-time impact of COVID-19. The Community Report became a much more involved project including in-depth interviews with senior management across SSG including reflection on flexibility and sustainability in times of unprecedented crisis.

We hope you read our story: [SSG Community Report 2021](#)



CREATING ENSURING HONORING RESPECTING SERVING TREATMENT

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Inaugural CARE Court Roundtable Convenes at P180 Kress House



Governor Gavin Newsom convened a roundtable at P180 Kress House in Los Angeles on March 10, 2022, where he met with clients, health care and service providers, and local and judicial officials to discuss his [CARE Court](#) proposal. CARE Court is a new policy framework for providing community-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment services to Californians with the most acute challenges, many of whom are experiencing homelessness.

The roundtable is the first in a series of statewide convenings that the Administration will host, bringing together Californians who would benefit from the new framework, health care providers, first responders, outreach workers, representatives from the courts, local officials and other stakeholders. Additional roundtables will be convened in upcoming months of clients, service providers, health care professionals, first responders, members of the judiciary, local officials and other stakeholders whose partnership is foundational to our community-based approach.

SSG DIRECTORS

SSG Directors Invited as Guest Speakers for UCLA's Dept. of Social Welfare

SSG Directors Emily Bell (P180) and Veronica Lewis (HOPICS) were invited to be guest speakers for the graduate course Mental Health Policy (SW M290K) at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, Dept. of Social Welfare in Spring 2022. The instructor is Lillian Fabros Bando, MSW, JD who came out of retirement from DMH to teach at UCLA. Per Lillian, both speakers were excellent and well received by the students. Way to go Emily and Veronica!

Congratulations to Veronica Lewis Appointment to Interagency Council on Homelessness



Congratulations to SSG HOPICS Division Director Veronica Lewis who was recently appointed effective 4/18/22 to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH). The Council's mission is to develop policies and identify resources, benefits, and services to prevent and work toward ending homelessness in California.

Veronica is pictured above being sworn in on 5/10/22 by LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell. Veronica's knowledge and leadership particularly in SPA 6 will be a valuable asset for the Council's mission to develop policies and identify resources, benefits, and services to prevent and work toward ending homelessness in California. For more info on Veronica and HOPICS please go to www.hopics.org.

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Each year various SSG Divisions accept student interns from various schools, colleges and universities. These students come from various disciplines including mental health, public health, occupational therapy and more. SSG Divisions gladly accept, train and utilize student interns for client services. These interns provide a valuable resource and are highly valued and appreciated. The following are the interns and their supervisors who attending our 2021-22 intern appreciation event on March 9, 2022. Much thanks to all!

APCTC

Irene Akther, CSUN
John Macro Feri, USC
Sharon Lau, UCLA
Amy Yang Liu, USC
Isha Sakhalakar, UCLA
Silvia Yan, Supervisor



PROJECT 180

Giselle Castor-Razo, CSULA
Bryan Chico, CSULA
Shima Daftarian, CSUDH
Stephanie Grande, CSULB
Fallon Lengson, CSULA
Edwin Payes, CSULB
Vanessa Pedraza, CSULA
Jackie Ramirez, CSULA
Cat Stevens, USC
Mariene Vazquez, CSULA
Albert Campos, Supervisor
Rita Phetmixay, Supervisor



Alliance

Yujue Wang, USC

OTTP LA

Jeffrey Palomino, USC
Bernice Verzosa, CSUDH
Stephanie Hoffman, Supervisor

AP Recovery

Alejandro Chavez Suchilt, UCLA
Mimi Nguyen, Supervisor



SILVER

Isabel Mejia, CSULB
Maribel Robles, CSULB

APAIT

Peter Errodas, USC
Haoran Li, UCLA
Michelle Lopez, CSUF
Mya Martinez-Palacios, UCI
Gilbert Vega, Capella University
Andrew Huynh, Staff
Hector Villa-Nieves, Staff
Cleo Oubre, Supervisor

HOPICS

Breanna Lazo, UCLA
Carla Francis, Supervisor
Gabriella Lewis, Supervisor

OTTP SF

Corrine Rodriguez, Samuel Merritt U
Nikki Matthews, Supervisor
Teresa Ricardo, Supervisor
Natalie Crittendon, Supervisor



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HOPICS

Expanding the Mobile Syringe Exchange Program



Oscar Arellano, our Harm Reduction Coordinator, worked with different governing bodies for nearly a year before finally succeeding in getting preliminary, and then full certification. HOPICS received certification from the City of Los Angeles AIDS Coordinators Office to set up a mobile syringe exchange in South LA on September 22, 2021.

We started our Harm Reduction Program on July 1, 2021 staffed by HOPICS E6 Street Outreach teams. The teams have been able to engage with IV drug-using clients in street encampments who have never been receptive to services. The teams provide a range of harm reduction supplies, including syringes, clean needles, cookers, safe smoking kits, condoms, naloxone, et al. Since July 2021, the teams have had over 1,000 encounters, distributed nearly 40,000 clean needles, and collected 7,500 used needles. The clients report that, through naloxone distribution, 86 overdoses have been reversed.

The program started without funding, using supplies distributed through the North American Syringe Exchange Network (funded by the State of California). We have since received two contracts to begin funding staff to take over harm reduction activity, one from DHS/ODR, and another from SAPC. We currently partner with the AIDS Health Foundation for mobile health testing, primarily HIV. We are working to expand our capacity for STI, HIV, and HepC testing as well, and to increase our ability to provide harm reduction supplies to sex workers.

We have an application pending for county-wide syringe exchange through SAPC (HOPICS assisted SAPC with developing their certification process), which will come with substantial supportive funds, as well as applications for additional funding from the City of LA and from SAMHSA. Interestingly, the SAMHSA application, co-authored by APAIT, came with explicit support from DHS/DPH, who submitted their own application which references our application as a combined DHS/DPH/HOPICS/APAIT program.

John Helyar, HOPICS Assoc Dir for Health & Engagement, with assistance from Oscar Arellano, presented at the Housing First Partners Conference in Seattle in April 2022 on how effective our Harm Reduction Program has been in engaging new street homeless clients, and getting them connected to housing.

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LA vs HATE RAPID RESPONSE NETWORK

SSG's LA vs. Hate Collaborative Welcomes New Partners & Expands Community Engagement

In Year 2021-2022, the LA vs. Hate Rapid Response Provider Network expanded to 14 partners to unite against, resist and report hate in response to L.A. County's wide geographical coverage for its diverse population of color, gender identities, youth and special needs who are increasingly the victims of biases, bigotry, discrimination and bullying.

Special Service for Groups, Inc. (SSG) is the lead contractor overseeing a network of subcontracted partners offering supportive resources for intervention and healing programs under the stewardship of L.A. County's Human Relations Commission. "With the noticeable rise in hate incidents, we sought to cement stronger ties with municipal leadership, such as city councils and human relation commissions, in order to create, promote and implement impactful solutions," said Rick Eng, SSG's program coordinator for LA vs. Hate.

The County's second United Against Hate Week in November 2021 saw significant recognition of LA vs. Hate's efforts by cities in Los Angeles County issuing proclamations that recognized the value it brought to their neighborhoods affected by hate incidents. They included Alhambra, Azusa, Carson, El Monte, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Los Angeles, Montebello, Rancho Palos Verdes, San Gabriel and Sierra Madre.

LA vs. Hate boosted its presence at civic and community events—some specifically organized in responding to the rise in hate aggression. In March, El Camino College organized a CommUnity Walk Against Hate on its campus with LA vs. Hate posters provided for marchers. In April, an Earth Day resources fair presented an opportunity to promote 211LA services available to seniors in Hacienda Heights. For the annual Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month in May, LA vs. Hate participated in tabling opportunities at the Block the Hate Rally in San Gabriel and Glendale Community College's first AAPI Heritage Month Night Market.

LA vs. Hate was the main sponsor of 40th Anniversary the commemoration of the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American male victim of deadly act of racial hatred in Detroit that ignited nationwide protests and demand for better civil rights protections. Held on July 23, 2022, the date of Chin's death, the public event featured a candlelight vigil at El Pueblo, the historic heart of Los Angeles. For more information, visit www.LAvsHATE.org.



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AP RECOVERY

Starlight Casa

On January 3rd, 2022, AP Recovery opened Starlight Casa in collaboration with the Office of Diversion & Re-entry. This pilot program is also known as the MIST Crisis Stabilization Unit. This new program houses clients who are deemed Misdemeanor Incompetent to Stand Trial (MIST). These clients do not meet criteria for a psychiatric hold, but are not quite ready for traditional MIST housing. We collaborated with Robert Jordan at One Step Closer, who is highly experienced in staff training and providing care with the chronically mentally ill population over the years. The crisis unit is community-based, short-term residential treatment unit that provides immediate care to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Services include MD and nursing support daily, along with 24/7 on site housing and clinical staff, ensuring clients are closely monitored and supported. When clients have stabilized, they can then transition to the traditional MIST housing site for ongoing mental health treatment. We are excited to be able to better serve our client and community members through Starlight Casa.



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OTTP-LA

OTTP-LA Client Success Story



Moniek VanGinnkel was a former client of Occupational Therapy Training Program (OTTP-LA). Moniek grew up in Compton and graduated from Carson High School in 1995. She grew up with a mother who was using drugs and gave up parental rights when she was about 5 years old. Moniek was then placed in the foster care system and her grandmother became her guardian. When Moniek was in the 10th and 11th grade, she was referred to OTTP's Independent Living Program (ILP) by her DCFS Social Worker.

OTTP's ILP facilitated groups that focused on life skills that youth could use in their daily life. Moniek remembers learning life skills which included how to balance a checkbook and write checks, open up a bank account, apply for colleges and complete job applications. OTTP's ILP provided mock job interviews, what to wear on an interview and other critical life skills you need to know as you enter into the real world.

Moniek said that going through the OTTP ILP program helped her immensely, especially because the groups covered things that were not taught in school. As she looks back at what she learned in ILP, she said these were skills she was able to utilize in life especially as a teenager and young adult.

Moniek works at a Chemical Plant and has worked there for the past 22 years. She has overcome being one of the only women at her workplace and has developed a great professional relationship with her co-workers. Moniek also has two sons that she is very proud of.

Moniek said that if she were to give advice to OTTP clients she would say don't give up and don't give up on yourself. Write your goals down and work on a plan. Don't wait for others to do things for you... you can do it! Moniek said her long term goal is to eventually run her own group home. She also owns a farm with horses and she hopes to run an afterschool program and summer program to work with youth. "I always wanted a job where I can help others."

"I thought the program was great! I developed a great relationship with the instructors (Annette) who was very personable and wanted me to succeed. Developing a relationship with adults who wanted to see you succeed in life and were genuine was very important to me as a teen. The staff wanted us to make something out of our life and made a huge difference, they cared about our future."

OTTP-LA Hosts 11th Annual Art Show



On May 26th, 2022 OTTP hosted its 11th Annual OTTP Art Show! This year's OTTP Art Show was sponsored, in part by, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture. Although OTTP missed their traditional in person Art Show format, this year's virtual Art Show proved to be a great success and a helpful reminder that there is more than one way to uplift client voices, foster connection, and celebrate community. OTTP received a grand total of 164 art pieces submitted by their youth and adult clients. This year's theme was



"A New Beginning". During the show, several OTTP clients performed, including playing instruments, dancing, singing, and sharing about their art. The 16 OTTP clients also had the opportunity to participate in virtual and in person art sessions, with guest artists, to create art which was featured in the show. Here's to next year!

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OTTP-SF

Growing Employment Support for Youth in San Francisco



It has been an exciting time for OTTP-SF's Employment Program. The program utilizes an evidence-based model called Individual Placement and Support (IPS). Using this model has led to great employment outcomes for the youth we serve, but it is also very staff intensive. The occupational therapists working in this program not only meet with clients, but they are also part of, and work closely with, the client's mental health team. In addition, they meet with employers on behalf of the client and at the client's worksite. As a result, occupational therapists are limited in the number of clients they can serve, and it is challenging to keep up with the need, leading to long wait lists.

OTTP-SF's Employment Program is funded through the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and we have been looking for additional funding to hire another occupational therapist for the team. Recently, we advocated for MediCal dollars to be included in our out-patient mental health services contract with the City & County San Francisco to provide vocational services, and it was added. Having additional funding to address clients' barriers to employment will make a huge difference in the employment program and will allow OTTP-SF to hire another occupational therapist. Ultimately, this will mean we will be able to serve more clients and help them to meet their employment goals!

Therapeutic Pottery Class



An OTTP-SF Occupational Therapist has been serving as a guest teacher/OT in the pottery class at Ida B. Wells High School. She was a little nervous coming in, as wheel throwing can be frustrating, especially for students with lower patience or frustration tolerances. However, she quickly discovered that the students LOVED it! While they were throwing, they talked with the OT about persistence, frustration tolerance, and breathing through the tough stuff. The art teacher mentioned that she has never seen the students so engaged in any other projects. She said that one student exhibited more energy than she has ever seen while throwing on the wheel. Another student told the OT she has always loved watching pottery throwing videos on TikTok, so together they made their own TikTok video of the student throwing. It was a true highlight for the OT to be able to share her passion and watch the students grow so much through this form of art. Together they learned that you can throw pots with long acrylic nails!

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APAIT

APAIT Awarded Multi-year Grant for HIV Prevention



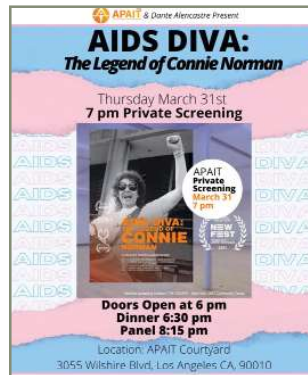
APAIT Advisory Board member
Dr. James Simmons

APAIT is excited to announce that our division received a High-Risk Impact multi-year grant for HIV prevention after a rigorous pre-decisional visit from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention held during the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Month. APAIT highlighted its work with BIPOC communities including the national media awareness campaign featuring its very own APAIT Advisory Board member Dr. James Simmons, one of the CDC's own Social Media Ambassadors and media personality from the "Q" (Queer) Channel. Congrats to the many hard working APAIT teams.

APAIT Hosts Film Screening of AIDS Diva: The Legend of Connie Norman



From L to R: Artistic Director of Trans Chorus of Los Angeles - Abdullah "Abby" Hall, Jazzmun Crayton, Producer John Johnston, Filmmaker/Director Dante Alencastre, Lesbian activist Torie Osborne, Jury Candelario, APAIT Director



From L to R: Lesbian activist Torie Osborne, APAIT Community Engagement Liaison (mentored by Connie Norman - Rev. Valerie Spencer) & filmmaker Dante Alencastre

In commemoration of Transgender Awareness And Visibility month, APAIT hosted the documentary screening of AIDS Diva: The Legend of Connie Norman, a renowned national trans activist who succumbed to AIDS in the late 90s and mentioned National AIDS speaker and APAIT Community Engagement Liaison Valerie Spencer. The film documentary screening took place on March 31, 2022 and was followed by a panel including Valerie, the filmmaker DANTE Alencastre, and film subject and community activist Torie Osborne. The award-winning documentary is making its rounds at international film festivals. Connie Norman's contribution to APAIT's development is crucial to the services it now provides for trans and gender non-confirming communities. Connie's name appears in one of APAIT's seminal awards it gives out to community leaders called the Connie Norman Advocacy Award.

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APAIT

APAIT Receives a Community Scholarship Award



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APAIT Receives a Community Scholarship Award



In celebration of the Thai New Year, APAIT was the recipient of the community scholarship award from the Imperial Court of Los Angeles and Hollywood which is led by APAIT's Advisory Board member Karina Samala. Known as Mother Karina to many, she is a legendary activist in the trans community and is Co-Founder of the City of Los Angeles Transgender Advisory Council which helped establish APAIT's Midnight Stroll Program addressing homelessness issues impacting Los Angeles LGBTQ+ communities.

APCTC

APCTC Meets with Royal Thai Consulate-General to Prevent & Address Hate Crimes



APCTC recently met with the Royal Thai Consulate-General of Los Angeles to discuss how they could work together to prevent and address hate incidents targeting Thai massage workers in Los Angeles. In attendance were the Consul-General, Mr. Tor Saralamba; Consul for Protection of Thai Nationals, Mr. Panot Kiatkong; and Consul of Protocol & Economic, Mr. Ithikorn Tritasavit. APCTC Director, Dr. Sheila Wu; SFV Program Manager, Tiger Doan; and Stop Hate program coordinator, Wanda Pathomrit represented APCTC.

This collaboration will be part of an exciting new intra-agency partnership between APCTC and APAIT, funded by the State of California Stop the Hate initiative. The project will target Chinese, Korean, and Thai community members, with a focus on individuals - primarily women - who work in massage businesses. These women experience unique vulnerability to hate incidents due to gender, language barriers, in some cases immigration status, and stigma often associated with their work. The project will conduct outreach to promote awareness and supportive services for women who are victims of hate incidents.

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BACUP

BACUP Staff Appreciation



Guadalupe Yepiz has been with SSG BACUP as an Art Instructor/Facilitator since August of 2021. Guadalupe was a teacher in the field of Applied Arts in Guadalajara for 12 years before moving to Los Angeles. She began working for Project Return as a Facilitator and the LA County Department of Mental Health where she was a group leader and promotor for a Mental Health Group and as an Art Instructor. She also specializes in crafts, jewelry making, painting, sewing, sculpting and technical drawing. Guadalupe's talent in art and instruction is enhanced by her compassion, patience and a heart for service. She runs Jewelry/Arts & Crafts groups Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Guadalupe's creations are amazing and unique. SSG BACUP is so fortunate to have such a talented artist on our team. Guadalupe truly enriches the lives of those around her.

APIFM

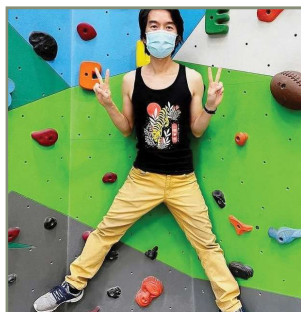
APIFM Enroll LA Team



APIFM Enroll LA team helps with CalFresh education and enrollment referral

From March to May, APIFM's Enroll LA team has met with 427 individuals and successfully referred 83 people to receive assistance with CalFresh (also known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP) or other public benefits enrollment. We've been told these are impressive numbers for such a new team in a short period of time—not bad for our first effort at CalFresh outreach! But this receptiveness also speaks to a persistent need among Chinese and Samoan speaking communities in LA for language and culturally accessible support (from community organizations, not merely phone interpretation services) in navigating public benefits right now. Many LA residents who qualify but speak a language other than English do not enroll due to barriers such as language, stigma and lack of knowledge about the program. APIFM is spending the summer following up with community members and planning for the next phase of the project. Shout out to the California Community Foundation for helping us to establish this project - thank you! If you or your clients would like more information about CalFresh, please contact us at info@apifm.org.

Sender One Fundraiser Benefits APIFM



API Forward Movement is thankful to Sender One climbing studios at the South Bay Los Angeles locations for their generous fundraiser that benefitted our programs. They designed beautiful 'Year of the Tiger' climbing tanks in February and 50% of the net proceeds were donated back to the API Forward Movement! This was a unique way for a company to not only get involved with local CBO's doing important work, but to also to honor the new year. You can read more about the inspiration behind this tank top from Alice Kao, CEO, and meet the artist, Ariel Lee on the Sender one blog. Check out Sender One studios and their locations throughout Los Angeles by visiting www.senderoneclimbing.com.

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APIFM

APIFM Program Updates



Greetings SSG family and Happy Summer! We would like to update you about a few exciting changes at APIFM, beginning with some context and a brief timeline of events.

In 2017, the organization rebranded from Asian Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance (API-OPA) to Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement (APIFM) and adopted a new mission statement, “We cultivate healthy, long lasting, and vibrant Asian and Pacific Islander communities through grassroots organizing.” At the time, “grassroots organizing” was an aspirational goal that the staff wanted to work towards and integrate in all facets of our work.

In 2021, APIFM went through a year-long organizational reflection and realignment process, with facilitation support from Dave Nakashima. We would like to share the key results with you and in-vite your input as well as questions.

From March to December, Dave facilitated 15 meetings in different configurations - full staff, sep-arate food and environment teams, managers only and staff only. He also met one on one with the Director, and the APIFM Advisory Board had two opportunities to offer their input.

As a result of these intentional conversations, APIFM has decided to revise its mission statement. The new mission statement, “We cultivate healthy, long lasting, and vibrant Asian and Pacific Is-lander communities through community-centered engagement, education, and advocacy,” does not change what we do but it more accurately reflects how we currently work together with API communities on food and environmental justice issues. This change also acknowledges that grass-roots organizing is not the main vehicle that we use to achieve our mission today. APIFM’s vision remains the same, “We want a world where Asian and Pacific Islander communities - and all com-munities of color - have full power to access good health and a healthy environment.”

We also identified three primary program areas - Food Roots Harvest (FRH), Food Roots Nourish (FRN) and Sustainable SGV (SSGV). We invite you to learn more at our refreshed website!

APIFM is now a team of 20 people. With this growth, we’re also working to strengthen our staff capacity and leadership team. In February 2022, we decided to adopt a Co-Director leadership structure in order to meet the capacity needs of the organization. We now have two co-directors, Heng Lam Foong and Kyle Tsukahira, and a team of Program Managers. To learn more about the staff who work tirelessly to serve our community and our dedicated advisory board members, check out our About page. In 2022, we are focused on supporting staff wellness, pay equity, personal and professional development and team building.

Although our planning process concluded in 2021, the implementation of the recommendations remains ongoing. This includes creating a framework and infrastructure for the Co-Director roles and the APIFM leadership team. We realize the year long conversation is a privilege and we’re grateful for the participation of our staff, the support of our Advisory Board and funding support from Cedars Sinai. Appreciation also to Trisha Morales for helping us to redesign our website. Most of all, we are grateful for the opportunity to work with Dave Nakashima who guided us with cultural humility from beginning to end.

With gratitude,

Heng Lam Foong

Kyle Tsukahira

SSG NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

APIDC SSG COMMUNITY PARTNER

“ALL OF US” NEW RESEARCH DATABASE



SSG community partner, Asians and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities of California (APIDC), was selected by the national health-focused organization, Asian Health Coalition (AHC), to join a national ground-breaking effort, called the All of Us Research Program (AoURP), which is the cornerstone of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Precision Medicine Initiative. All of Us involves gathering health-related data from one million or more people living in the United States to accelerate research and improve health. APIDC was one of 19 community-based Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) organizations selected from throughout the country to increase AANHPI participation in All of Us through engagement and education of diverse AANHPI communities historically underrepresented in biomedical research.

Precision Medicine is a revolutionary approach to disease prevention and treatment that takes into account individual differences in lifestyle, environment, and biology. Through All of Us, researchers will use data from the program to learn more about how individual differences that can influence health and disease. Also, participants may be able to learn more about their own health and contribute to an effort that may advance the health of generations to come.

For the past year, as part of the Asian Engagement and Recruitment Core (ARC) led by the AHC, APIDC has been conducting outreach, engagement, and education across AANHPI communities, including the disability community, LGBTQ community, and college students. APIDC has taken different approaches to outreach, including posting on social media, providing information at community events, publishing newsletters, and using broadcast media. One example of APIDC's outreach activities was to work with the ABC television network West Coast flagship station KABC-TV to do a news story on All of Us as part of the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month recognition, shown here: [ABC 7 Publication](#)

For more information about the All of Us Research Program, APIDC's outreach and education efforts, and how you can participate, please visit their website at <https://www.joinallofus.org/> and <https://www.apidisabilities.org/aourp>.



SSG NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Scam Prevention Tips



Nobody expects to get scammed, but in our increasingly digital world you can never be too careful. Many scams seem obvious—a phone call from a “distant relative” you’ve never heard of before or a phone call from a “government agent” asking for your bank account details to pay off a debt you don’t have. But some scams are much harder to discern, and if you aren’t careful, it can be easy to fall right into one.

Here are some common red flags to watch out for and tips to help you avoid falling for a scam:



1. The golden rule: if it seems too good to be true...it probably is.

Do your research and know what is reasonable and what seems too good to be true. Renting an apartment? Know what the local housing market looks like. If the average cost of a 1 bedroom is around \$1000/month in LA, then a 2-bed 2-bath apartment on the 28th floor of a newer building for only \$1400/month is likely too good to be true.

2. Never wire transfer money (especially overseas) unless you are certain who the person is and where the money is going.

Most official platforms will provide an option to pay directly through your credit/debit card or use a third-party platform such as PayPal. Any stranger on the phone that tells you to wire transfer money is likely a scammer and the chances of you getting your money back are next to none.

3. Recognize fake websites.

If Google flags a website as “dangerous,” it likely is, so always check the website domain and ensure it is official. Many websites will have a list of their official email and website domains, so if you aren’t sure, you can compare the domains or complete your search manually from the home page of the official domain. Even a link from an email that brings you directly to the “website” can look and work identically to the real ones.

4. Keep communications in official platforms and channels.

Some companies require that you keep all communications within their own messaging platforms, so avoid messaging in social media apps or texting when there is an official channel that should be used. This ensures that the host company can track your communications, verify your identities and transactions, and protect you should you be scammed.

5. Don’t be swayed by any plays on your emotions or sense of urgency.

Many scammers will manipulate your emotions and push you with a sense of urgency. They might tell you an elaborate story about their life or ask you to take care of their home as if it were your own. Always be extra cautious when this happens.

6. Always ask for some sort of proof.

Renting a house? Ask to video call with the seller first to verify their identity and the product being marketed. Don’t just settle for the stock photos you can find online and it’s even more safe to wait until you physically see the product/place before sending money.

SSG NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Growing SSG

Corporate & Employee Giving Platform Feature



Benevity - Corporate Purpose in One Platform

Many non-profit organizations ask the same question when it comes to corporate giving. Where do I start? Benevity has become one of the most popular platforms in recent years for just that! With 750+ of the world's most purpose-driven brands/companies using it to find philanthropic organizations and projects to invest in, this platform has become a one-stop shopping for giving back.

For-profit companies use Benevity to achieve:

1) Corporate Social Responsibility 2) Community Investment 3) Employee Engagement 4) Customer Engagement

Then nonprofits can engage with this platform to become known to those companies, whether it is simply setting up a searchable nonprofit profile or designing a "Project" for a company to volunteer for and/or donate to. SSG is registered with Benevity so that we can make these opportunities available to our divisions.

If you are a division that is curious to learn more, then email us at devteam@ssg.org.

MARCH 2022

Holidays & Observances

- Tuesday March 1st
Pancake Day
- Thursday March 3rd
I Want You to be Happy Day
- Sunday March 6th
Dentist's Day
- Thursday March 10th
Landline Telephone Day
- Sunday March 13th
K9 Veterans Day
- Thursday March 17th
St. Patrick's Day
- Sunday March 20th
Proposal Day
- Tuesday March 22nd
Daffodil Day
- Sunday March 27th
Scribble Day
- Thursday March 31st
Bunsen Burner Day

APRIL 2022

Holidays & Observances

- Friday April 1st
Walk to Work Day
- Wednesday April 6th
Student-Athlete Day
- Sunday April 10th
Farm Animals Day
- Thursday April 14th
Gardening Day
- Sunday April 17th
Easter Day
- Monday April 18th
Velociraptor Awareness Day
- Sunday April 24th
Skipping Day
- Wednesday April 27th
Babe Ruth Day
- Friday April 29th
Zipper Day
- Saturday April 30th
Bubble Tea Day

MAY 2022

Holidays & Observances

- Sunday May 1st
World Laughter Day
- Friday May 6th
Nurses Day
- Tuesday May 10th
Shrimp Day
- Friday May 13th
Frog Jumping Day
- Monday May 16th
Barbecue Day
- Friday May 20th
Rescue Dog Day
- Saturday May 21st
Talk like Yoda Day
- Sunday May 22nd
Buy a Musical Instrument Day
- Sunday May 29th
International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
- Monday May 30th
Memorial Day (SSG Holiday)

JUNE 2022

Holidays & Observances

- Wednesday June 1st
Global Running Day
- Friday June 3rd
Love Conquers All Day
- Sunday June 5th
Donut Day
- Wednesday June 8th
World Oceans Day
- Monday June 13th
Sewing Machine Day
- Saturday June 18th
Sushi Day
- Sunday June 19th
Juneteenth Observed (SSG Holiday)
- Tuesday June 21st
Go Skateboarding Day
- Saturday June 25th
World Vitiligo Day
- Thursday June 30th
Meteor Watch Day

SSG NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

SAFETY

Wild Fire Safety Tips

Wildfires are some of the most destructive forces of nature. There isn't much that can be done to deter a wildfire's path. Fortunately, there are ways to help mitigate property damage and maintain personal safety. Learning how you can help protect your home and business structures, keeping you and your family safe, and knowing how and when to evacuate are important steps during California wildfire seasons.



STEPS BEFORE A WILDFIRE

Secure your property for a wildfire and limit the fuel source.

Within 30 Feet from Your Home

- Clear combustible materials such as dried leaves and pine needles.
- Cut down any tree limbs that are 15 feet or closer to the ground. This will help prevent the fire from spreading.
- Remove any vines or vegetation on the side of your house or business.
- Place any flammable lawn furniture in storage when not in use.
- Opt for non-flammable decor, such as gravel as opposed to wood chips.
- Within 100 to 30 Feet from Your Home
- Create "fuel breaks" in your property. Hopefully, these areas will help stop the spread of a fire. These can be gravel pathways or driveways.
- Cut trees branches close to the ground as well as combustible vegetation.

Within 200 to 100 Feet from Your Home

- Place any stacked firewood or scrap wood.
- Continue to clear combustible vegetation.
- Plant trees far enough apart so their branches do not touch.

Prepare your home or business for a wildfire. If possible, use Class A roofing material. This includes tile, slate, or asphalt. You can also use Class B pressure-treated shingles or shakes. Test smoke alarms monthly and change their batteries annually. Also, consider installing fire sprinklers.

Outside your home, make sure you have enough garden hose available to reach any part of your property and designate water sources such as: swimming pools, ponds, lakes, wells and fire hydrants for fire officials.

Create an emergency escape plan. Speak to city and town officials to learn what the evacuation route is for your area. Discuss this evacuation route with everyone in your family and your employees. Sign up for emergency text or alert messages and create an emergency kit.

STEPS DURING A WILDFIRE

Prepare to evacuate. Listen to emergency channels and know the status of the fire. Put emergency supplies and must-have items in the car so you can evacuate quickly. Evacuate immediately if told to do so. If you have time, there are steps you can take to help protect your property when you evacuate. These steps include:

- Moving furniture to the center of rooms and taking down drapes and curtains to prevent combustion.
- Closing all windows and doors to prevent drafts and reduce heat.
- Shutting off natural gas from its source.
- Turning on all lights in your property so that firefighters can more easily see it through smoke.

STEPS AFTER A WILDFIRE

Return only when it is safe. Do not go back to your property until officials declare it safe to do so. Check your house and surrounding property for hot spots and extinguish them immediately. Be on the lookout for ash pits. These are holes filled with hot ashes left by burned trees.

Document damage, Take photos, video and make a list documenting damaged property. Contact your insurance company immediately

DRIVING TIPS DURING THE WILDFIRE SEASON

Remember that driving near a wildfire should only be done in an emergency situation or under mandatory evacuation. If it's unavoidable, make every attempt to take an alternate driving route as far away from the smoke-prone area as possible.

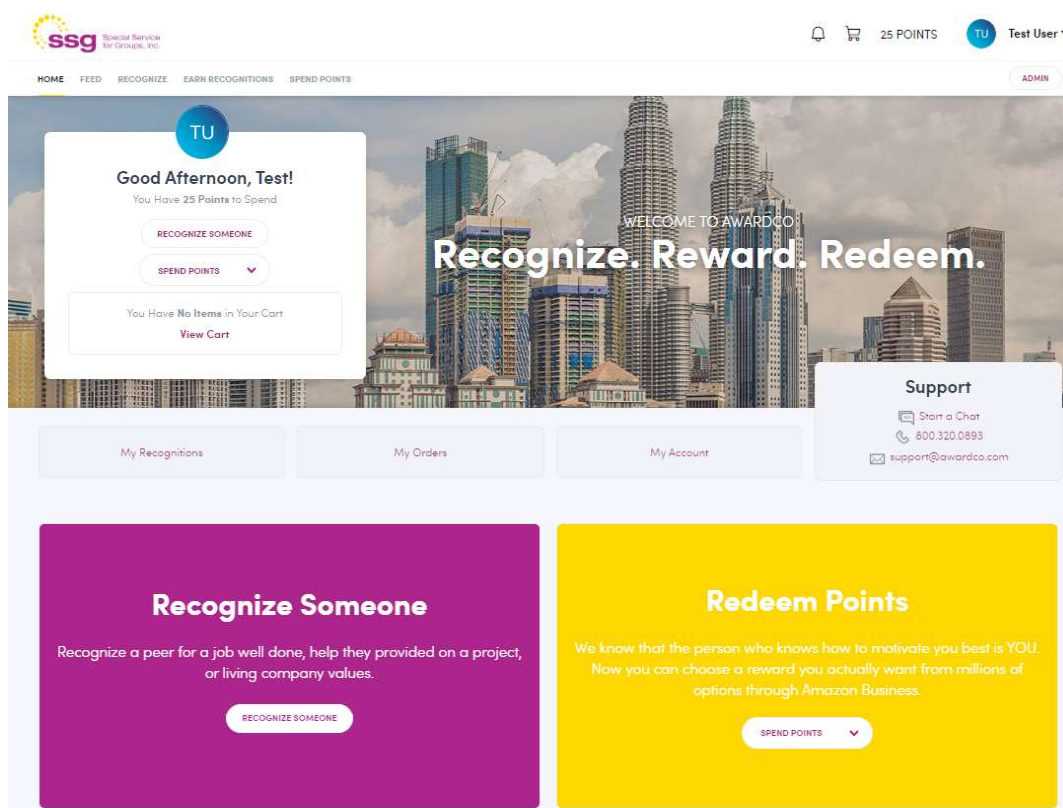
- Make sure you are aware of current road conditions before you begin driving, and density and direction of the smoke before driving.
- Reduce your speed for a safe stopping distance between vehicles because visibility will be lowered.
- Make sure windows, mirrors, & headlights are clear from ash and dust before you leave. Keep your windows tightly rolled up while driving.
- If you find yourself in severe smoke, emergency flashers may help make you more visible to others and do NOT use your high beams.
- If you must stop, steer off of the roadway as far as safely possible. Try to avoid stopping near big bushes and trees.
- Carry items in the car with you such as a cell phone, first aid kit, and map in case of an emergency.
- Do not use driving navigation apps such as Waze unless approved by police and fire safety officials. Recently, navigation apps were instructing users to drive towards streets in areas on fire because they were less crowded at the time.

SSG NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

HR REMINDERS

SSG Partners with AwardCo

Great News!! SSG has partnered with AwardCo to bring you an online employee reward and recognition program. With AwardCo birthdays and years of services will be privately acknowledged and you will be able to send a recognition to any SSG employee. Expect an email from AwardCo in the next few days with login information.



SSG Employee Assistance Program Benefits

SSG Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered through Life Assistance Program

How to Access:

- By Phone: (800) 538-3543
- Online: www.cignalap.com



Benefits:

- Face-to-Face Assistance for you and your household member (3 sessions per situation)
 - Support & Referral Services
- Discounts on Health & Wellness Services
- Confidential (information not shared with SSG)
 - Available 24/7

YOUR NAME OR PICTURE MAY APPEAR IN SSG'S NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE

If you participate in an agency event and an article or picture from that event is submitted for publication, your name and/or picture may be included. If you do not approve of this, then please refrain from being photographed at events and let your supervisor know not to include your name in articles. For any inquiries related to the SSG Newsletter please email newsletter@ssg.org.