

## **Site Visit to Lu Mien Community Services August 31, 2016**

### **Background**

The Lu Mien people are originally from Laos where they were primarily an agricultural society. They served as scouts during the Vietnamese war necessitating that they escape from Laos during the communist takeover of Vietnam. Many of them spent extended periods of time in refugee camps in Thailand. There are approximately 12,000-14,000 Lu Mien in Sacramento making it one of the biggest Lu Mien communities in the country.

We met with Kao C. Thun, the Managing Director and Kao Nyuan Seaphanh, Vice President of the Board of Directors.

### **Budget**

- \$75,000 from MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention Funds
- \$61,000 from fund-raising
- \$28,000 pro bono funds
- Total \$165,000

### **Services**

The adult and adolescent clients have mental health issues, such as PTSD and depression; however, the central concept of the program is to focus on wellness and well-being and avoid mentioning mental health services because of the stigma associated with mental illness in the Asian culture.

#### Health Village Senior Group

- Age range 40's to late 80's
- Clients experience PTSD, depression, insomnia
- Staffed by Managing Director of program and part-time assistant
- The program meets twice a week and serves 45-55 persons
- Services offered include socializing, sharing crafts with each other, exercise, snacks; generally opportunities to engage with peers.

#### Intergenerational Group

- Age range for youth 10-18; age range for parents 40's to 60's
- Focused on acculturation problems between children and parents in that children begin to identify with American culture, which complicates their ability to communicate and relate to their parents
- Staffed by a part-time staff person with fluency in Mien and English
- Program meets twice a week and serves 15-25 people
- Services include teaching youth Mien language and parents English and help dealing with other acculturation issues

### S.A.E. Mien Club

- Age range 11-24 years
- Staffed by a part-time college student from Sac State getting her degree in Social Work. She will be hired full time once she finishes her degree.
- Services teach youth about Mien culture;,, provide a safe and friendly environment to combat any feelings of inferiority due to being a minority population; talk about suicide prevention, depression, and being bullied
- Program meets once a week and serves 10-15 youth

### Asian Youth Conference

2017 will mark the 17<sup>th</sup> year that the program has sponsored this conference. It has the following goals:

- Educate the community about the cultural identity of the Lu Mien people
- Promote education—provide information about higher education resources such as grants and scholarships
- Promote leadership and confidence among the youth
- Promote career aspirations by having various Mien professionals at the conference as role models

### **Outreach**

The program conducts outreach in various ways:

- The Elder Council—this is a governing body for the Lu Mien community
- Local churches
- Saturday morning radio program
- Annual Youth Conference
- Multicultural Festival
- Board of Directors networking