



## THAI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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January 29, 2018

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### **Asian Pacific Islander Human Trafficking Task Force Launches Outreach Campaign: Community Organizations Tackle Human Trafficking Epidemic in Los Angeles County**

January 29, 2018—The Asian Pacific Islander Human Trafficking Task Force (APIHTTF) of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) launched a new outreach campaign to raise awareness of human trafficking in API communities in Los Angeles County and help survivors secure necessary services. The community-based organizations that are part of the task force collaborating on the outreach include the Korean American Family Services (KFAM), Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC), Pacific Asian Counseling Services (PACS), Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), South Asian Network (SAN), Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team (APAIT), Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles (Advancing Justice-LA), Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA), and Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)— will provide FREE counseling, case management, legal services and mental health services to API human trafficking victims and survivors. Services will be offered in various locations throughout Los Angeles County in the following languages: Bangla, Cambodian/Khmer, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, Vietnamese and English.

Working in conjunction with the API Human Trafficking Task Force, the press conference's first speaker, Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer made it emphatically clear that, "human trafficking is deplorable and we must stamp it out. I'm proud to work hand-in-hand with the API Human Trafficking Task Force as we fight to do just that. Today I call on victims who've suffered this despicable form of modern day slavery to come forward--we are here for you."

Following City Attorney Feuer's remarks, Ima Matul, a labor trafficking survivor and a CAST Survivor Leadership Program Coordinator, emphasized the importance of connecting survivors to services as she states, "Connecting survivors into services is very important and not just any services, but services that are long-term, trauma-informed, and are client-centered to help them through their healing, rebuilding their life, and building up their confidence."

In support of the stepped up outreach and educational campaign, LA Community College Board Trustee Mike Eng remarked, "This outreach campaign is critical in helping identify API community members who have been trafficked and enabling them to receive services in their language by organizations who understand their experiences."

Labor trafficking survivor Stephanie Ong who was served by the PWC and Advancing Justice-LA related her own experience, "I called because I was injured and scared and didn't know what to do. Now I still have to

deal with the trauma as a survivor, but I have my T visa, a job and I just went back to school. I don't know where I would be without all of the support I received from my community. We need to get the word out to reach all human trafficking victims and survivors so that they are not alone."

And on behalf of a sex trafficking survivor served by Thai CDC who cannot speak in person as the case is still open, Thai CDC's Directing Attorney, Panida Rzonca read the following statement illustrating just how dangerous it can be for victims to come forward, "I didn't dare say anything because I was afraid of being killed. I had no friends I could trust. No one wants to mess with a contract girl for fear of being hurt or killed. My traffickers are so well connected and I didn't think I could ever escape. Now, I feel that I have passed the worst moments in my life and I can finally move on."

After these powerful and impactful statements by human trafficking survivors, Chanchanit Martorell, Thai CDC Executive Director and Co-chair of the API Human Trafficking Task Force announced the very reason why a collaborative of eight API Human Trafficking Task Force members who are also A3PCON organizations were just awarded a U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) grant for three years in the amount of \$600,000 to provide the specialized services to Asian Pacific Islander victims of human trafficking from the Thai, Cambodian, Korean, Chinese, South Asian, Vietnamese, and Pilipino communities.

She states, "Members of this OVC collaborative who are also A3PCON organizations have been providing counseling and case management to our community members for decades so they are uniquely positioned to offer much-needed services to trafficking survivors."

KFAM Executive Director Connie Chung Joe who also co-chairs the API Human Trafficking Task Force stated, "Human trafficking involving both labor and sex trafficking has long been a problem in our communities. Thanks to this recent funding from U.S. Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crime, API community-based organizations and our collaborative partners are able to work together to identify potential victims and help them access culturally and linguistically appropriate ways."

As part of this OVC grant, the collaborative was able to produce the first outreach materials to educate the public about the endemic and growing problem of human trafficking in the API community and how and where victims can access immediate aid and services. The brochures were produced in eight different languages including English, Thai, Hindi, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Tagalog and were distributed at the conclusion of the press conference.

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