



Legislature Responds to APANO Advocacy: Concrete Wins in 2015

Our priorities have developed from years of listening circles, community forums, and one on one conversations with members like you that have surfaced issues that affect our Asian & Pacific Islander children and families. With our vision for racial justice, health equity and strong families, and a growing base of member-leaders, APANO has led and supported campaigns that are transforming Oregon into a state where all people have the rights, resources and recognition needed to thrive. Check out our member profiles on our social media to see the inspiring stories and personal connections to these issues. We hope you will take pride in our gains and accomplishments that are the result of our collective, growing policy advocacy. Here are some of our biggest highlights:



Education Equity for ELL Students – English Language Learners (ELL) students have grown 120 percent in the last decade to over 57,000 in Oregon. They still experience significant disparities in academic achievement and graduation rates. HB 3499 creates a comprehensive intervention that will increase transparency and create systemic supports for school districts that bring needed focus and urgency to ELL students. HB 3499 includes \$12.5 million dollars to improve ELL services.

Immigrant Health Access – Oregon has reduced the uninsured by 63% with healthcare reform, yet communities of color, immigrants, refugees and low-wage workers are over represented among the 5% who remain uninsured. With the Oregon Health Equity Alliance, we won HB 2934, HB 2522 and budget allocations support to expand access and design new programs to better serve our communities, particularly the estimated 2,000 COFA Pacific Islanders excluded from Medicaid, 6,000 low-income Legal Permanent Residents (immigrants) who face the 5 Year waiting period for Medicaid, 20,000 undocumented low-income children and 50,000 working adults who make too much for Medicaid and make too little to afford the high cost of health insurance on Cover Oregon. We will continue to fight for solutions to ensure all Oregonians, regardless of citizenship, have access to healthcare.

Reproductive Justice – We are working so that every woman and person who can get pregnant can choose their own path to a healthy life, and ensuring they have equal access the full range of reproductive healthcare. Oregon has a patchwork of restrictions that impact low-income, immigrant, rural and young persons that undermine their ability to prevent an unintended pregnancy or carry a healthy pregnancy to term. While SB 894 did not pass this session, a bill that would fill gaps in Oregon law and ensure access to the full range of reproductive healthcare – including safe, legal abortion – we brought our values and stories to the legislature in a powerful new way to raise visibility and build support for 2016.

Paid Sick Leave – When we or our families get sick, we don't want to risk our jobs or going to work sick to get better. A handful of paid sick days a year will help keep our workers, families, workplaces, schools and communities healthier. Currently 47% of Oregonians who work in private sector jobs, and 80% of low-wage workers lack paid sick time. SB 454 builds on our successes in Eugene and Portland, establishing paid sick leave for over 500,000 working Oregonians.

Voting Rights – Voting is a fundamental right of citizenship and a direct indicator of community health and opportunity. Despite our growing numbers, Asian & Pacific Islanders have faced historic discrimination and lack of access to democracy. We helped win Oregon's new Motor Voter law, HB 2177, that will enfranchise over 20,000 API voters, about 50% of the unregistered yet eligible API voters in our state.

Looking ahead, APANO will be deeply engaged in the policy implementation process, to ensure the rules and regulations are accountable to the vision of our legislative wins. We'll be expanding our community organizing and leadership development to bring more APANO members into the work, and help identify our next round of priorities for 2016. Thank you for your support and contributions to these big wins! Contact Kathy Wai our Policy Advocacy Coordinator to learn more about our upcoming HEART campaign kathy@apano.org 971-340-4861.

Love Letter from an Immigrant Mama: Decolonize or Else!

This article was originally published in APANO's Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month blog series back in May.

For the last 15 years that I've been parenting in the United States, separate and isolated from my family and community in the Philippines, I've struggled to find my grounding and feel authentic as I raise three mixed-race children. *Aware of the pervasive white culture we are surrounded with, I try to be mindful in lifting up Filipino traditions and cultural practices.* I assumed like many Filipino immigrants before me that food would be the key and rope that would tether us to my cultural roots. However, I've been reminded recently by a wise Filipino elder that we will not be able to teach our children to love my country by cooking adobo and teaching them the tinikling. They will only love the Philippines when they take the problems of the country as their own, and work to solve them.

The battle parents share is the constant sensation that what we do is never enough. And for families from colonized countries such as my own, this sensation of inadequacy is intense and reinforced systematically across many institutions – other families, media, government, schools, church, businesses. Any effort or exercise towards decolonization – reminding myself of my indigenous wisdom and the value of our cultural roots – can often feel small and futile. Recently, I had begun to feel desperate and that the window of opportunity to deeply ingrain in my children's DNA a love for the Philippines slipping away. I aspired to do something seismic and life-changing.

Last year, my husband and I decided to let our eldest child Gabriel who's 15 years old to stay in the Philippines by himself for 3 months. Now, because my son and I are both documented immigrants, I fully recognize the privilege I have in being able to explore efforts to decolonize that allow us to travel freely. I am grateful for that and one day I pray all immigrant mothers can send their children home to immerse in their cultural roots without fear of losing them.

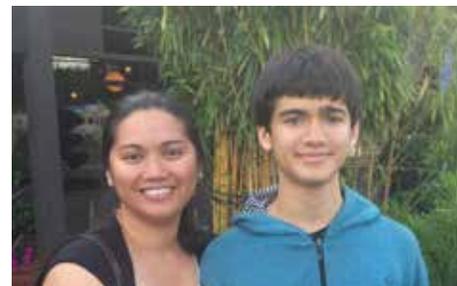
Minamahal kong (My beloved) Gabriel,

You've asked me several times now why we've arranged to have you stay in the Philippines for 3 months, almost 10 weeks longer than every other member of our family. This is an important question, and you deserve a full and detailed response. Clearly, what your tatay and I are asking from you is a leap of faith and a lot of trust from you that this decision is in your best interests.

Above all these reasons, the primary one is because I love you. Although there isn't much in terms of material wealth that I can give you, the best gift I can think to share is a complete and immense sense of family and country. The best parts of myself, that I am most proud of and grateful for, is my family and the only way I know to share that with you is to let you be surrounded by their love and experience it on a daily basis.

Here else are the top 10 reasons why we think your extended stay in the Philippines is a great opportunity:

1. You get to spend unmoderated time with lolo and lola, uncles and aunties, titas and titos. You get to feel their love without me hovering over your shoulder.
2. You move beyond being a tourist in the Philippines, to becoming Filipino. This can only happen if you have the daily challenges and joys of Filipinos doing the mundane and the unusual.
3. You get immersed in a gorgeous dynamic heartbreaking heartwarming culture. Our complex and often tragic histories and stories have given way to some of the most beautiful poems, songs, movies, stories and artwork. I hope you find pride in them.
4. You learn more about the larger world. There are 100 million Filipinos in the Philippines (the size of Arizona) – it is literally a larger world than Portland will ever be. There is much you can learn about dealing with people from all walks of life in a massive stage such as Manila.
5. You'll build beautiful friendships that will last a lifetime. My friends made here in the Philippines can make me laugh like no other, and are without a doubt the strength I draw from during my darkest days. Let yourself be open and vulnerable to people, this will be essential in life.
6. You will experience kindness, generosity and warm caring support, learning the many ways it can look and sound like. Remember to show kindness and love. Even though Filipinos are relentlessly thoughtful to most everyone, they are



by Aimee Santos-Lyons

Aimee is a "Martial-Law baby" from the Philippines who cut her organizing teeth with women and young people living in Manila's urban poor communities. She is Director of Programs at Western States Center, working to advance racial, gender and economic justice. You can reach her at aimee.santoslyons@gmail.com

especially caring to those who are warm and kind-hearted to them as well. You will be surprised at how wonderful this can feel.

7. You get an opportunity to show Filipinos the best of Americans and how you have been shaped by our community in Portland as well.
8. You deepen your independence AND your interdependence, learning to handle things on your own as well as relying on a whole village of family and friends to help you get by. You learn to deal with challenges and become world-smart. Part of this is making facing problems by yourself and making decisions by yourself. Though you'll get a lot of help, guidance and wisdom from lola, lolo, the uncles, auntie, titas and titos, for some things you will have to make the decision yourself. And as scary as that sounds, that's the path to adulthood.
9. You'll learn more about privilege, poverty, who has power and what it takes to have compassion for others. All of this can be seen and felt deeply in the Philippines, and to be caring human beings we need to be aware of how others live in the world, what the dividing lines are that lead to inequality, and ultimately what our responsibilities are in dismantling them.
10. Mangoes, mangoes, mangoes. And you get to see whale sharks!!!

Even with your misgivings, I am thankful that you are making the most of this trip. This means a lot to me Gabriel – my firstborn spending this dedicated time in the country of our birth and the home that has deeply shaped me and fuels my love, my imagination and my sense of self and community. A big part of why I also do this is because I want you to know me better – more than just being your mom and the person who nags and tracks your chores and schoolwork. Before I was any of that, I was a young person just like yourself – I had friends, meaningful work, colleagues and a community I was a meaningful part of. My story is wrapped closely and tightly with the story of the Philippines. I hope your time here can see beyond the obvious poverty and environmental degradation. Much of what is beautiful and heartwarming about the Philippines, is our people. I hope you take the time and effort to get to know them Gabriel. Not just in what they can do for you but also what you can do for them.

My last word on this is to remind you again that I do this because I love you. And it may not look like much or feel expensive, but this is the richest, most extravagant gift I can think of giving you. I wish for you the best times of your life anak.

Nagmamahal (much love),

Mom

New Staff



Jeanice Chieng
Education Justice Manager



Trami Nguyen
Bilingual Organizer



Shannon Paine
Communications Associate

New Board Members



Jean Yamamoto

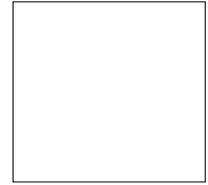


Mike Pichay



Andrea Miller

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Jade International Night Markets



The Jade District is thrilled to host the second annual Jade International Night Market this summer! Please mark your calendars and join us on Saturday, August 15th, 2015 and Saturday, August 22nd, 2015. The Jade District will hold the markets at the PCC SE Campus, located at 2305 SE 82nd Ave., Portland, Oregon and will run from 5:00 to 10:00. Please join us for two evenings of performances and food from around the globe! For sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, please contact the Jade District Manager, Todd Struble at todd@apano.org or call 971-340-4866.

Save the Date

- Aug. 15 & 22 **Jade International Night Markets**
- Sept. 10 **APANO Member Social**
- Sept. 15 **Disoriented Comedy**
- Sept. 19 **Salem House Party**
- Oct. 17 **Eugene House Party**
- Nov. 10 **Town Hall: Portland**
- Nov. 11 **Town Hall: Salem**
- Nov. 12 **Town Hall: Eugene**
- Nov. 12 **APANO Member Social**

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