



# The Legal Connection

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2008

## Seasons Greetings!



It is amazing to have witnessed the exciting decade-growth of the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center from a law student-driven volunteer group to a regional legal services agency. Since our start in 1998, APALRC maintains a multilingual helpline, recruits and trains members of the Legal Interpreter Project, and has staff attorneys who address community and legal issues spanning three jurisdictions. Because APALRC began around the passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 1996, unlike most APA legal organizations, we became experts assisting Asian immigrant survivors of

domestic violence. Over this past decade, we have assisted hundreds of Asian Pacific Americans seeking assistance to end domestic violence. APALRC also has assisted hundreds of crime victims with services and government compensation. Further, as a co-founder and fiscal agent of the D.C. Language Access Coalition, APALRC has led the advocacy efforts to ensure language access in the District. Our language access advocacy includes filing one of the nation's only victorious administrative complaints against a local law enforcement agency that mistakenly incarcerated a Korean-speaking client and that never provided any language assistance.

Despite the economic downturn, APALRC has been fortunate to be able to innovate and deal with novel community needs as they arise. As our staff has grown, we now are able to address more issues including a South Asian community needs assessment of the District, affordable housing and community economic development, nail-salon workplace safety, immigrant trafficking, and public schools and youth. And attentive toward our community's growth, APALRC provides regional leadership and ensures that Asian Pacific Americans of Maryland and Virginia have equal access to legal services.

On a personal note, I have worked in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, and Chicago – thus I have had the privilege to work with entirely different Asian Pacific American communities (significantly larger and older). I sought this leadership opportunity to assist Asian Pacific Americans of D.C., Maryland, and Virginia because of the ongoing need for a pan-Asian voice for the Capital region and because the local mainstream communities are mindful of our exclusion from mainstream civic engagement. I, like the entire APALRC staff, have been successful due to the benefit of a supportive family but have seen many others who have been less fortunate because of language ability or immigration status.

As we enter our second decade, we will continue to ensure that language-access and immigrant-status institutional barriers are eliminated and that APA individuals have equal opportunity to succeed.

Warmest Holiday Wishes to you and your loved ones,

Myron Dean Quon  
Executive Director

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## APALRC Legal Helpline and Legal Interpreter Project (LIP) Fill a Critical Gap in Access to Justice for Low-Income, Limited-English Proficient Asian Americans in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Region

In 2008, the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) handled over 350 cases for the Washington D.C. metropolitan region's limited-English proficient Asian Americans, who sought legal assistance through our multilingual Helpline— previously known as "Hotline"— or referrals from our community partners. The top three most spoken Asian languages were Korean (31%), Chinese (24%), and Vietnamese (9%). About 43% of the clients were VA residents; 40% MD residents; and 14% DC residents.

Since 1998, our Legal Helpline has been the flagship project of APALRC, and is the interface between our outreach work and in-house legal services. Approximately 25 bilingual law students volunteer each semester with APALRC to assist Helpline callers. When an individual calls the Helpline, an APALRC volunteer conducts an intake interview in the caller's native language. Helpline assistance is free of charge to callers, and the level of service APALRC provides depends on factors such as the caller's legal issue and household income. For clients who are referred out, we provide legal interpreter and translator support to ensure that language does not continue to present a barrier to services.

"I can't tell you enough how much I appreciate your kindness and enthusiasm to provide legal services not only to an individual like myself, but the whole Asian American community."  
- a Helpline caller

### In the Washington metropolitan area, the "limited English proficient" (LEP) population increased by nearly 80 percent between 1990 and 2000.

In total, the proportion of residents considered to have limited English speaking skills increased from 6 percent to 9 percent in the region and from 5 percent to 7 percent in the District alone.

- Audrey Singer, *Polyglot Washington: Language Needs and Abilities in the Nation's Capital*, The Brookings Institution, (2004)

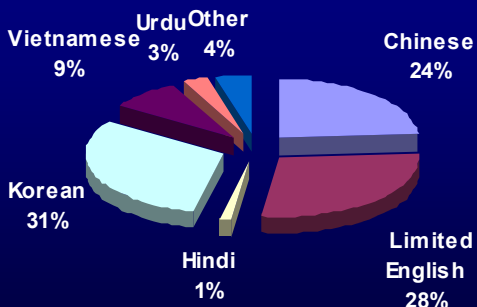
As such, the APALRC Legal Interpreter Project (LIP) often supports the work of the Helpline. Through LIP, APALRC recruits community members to go through a two-day training program on legal interpretation. APALRC currently has a pool of 43 trained interpreters and translators whose collective skills span 14 different Asian languages. Our trained legal interpreters and translators have assisted with on-site interpretation for attorney-client meetings, interpretation via telephone, and translation of affidavits and other documents.

LIP interpreters and translators have also provided their services in our outreach efforts, including spreading awareness of citizens' voting rights among the Asian American communities before the 2008 presidential election, interpreting at community meetings, or translating outreach materials for media and door-to-door distribution. Other organizations such as Housing Counseling Services, Bread for the City Legal Clinic, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority have also used our interpretation and translation services for their community trainings, public announcements, and attorney-client meetings, proving the importance of and need for appropriate legal interpretation and translation services for the region's many limited-English proficient Asian Americans.

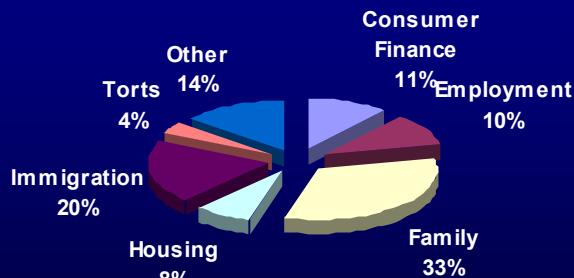
For more information about our Helpline or LIP, please contact Betty Luan at [betty.luan@apalrc.org](mailto:betty.luan@apalrc.org).

## 2008 Client & Case Data

Languages



Issue Areas



Other: Arabic, Burmese, Farsi, Gujarati, Japanese, Khmer, & Thai (each less than 1% of total)

Other: Criminal, Education, General Inquiry, Health, Individual Rights, Juvenile, Wages, and Wills (each less than 3% of total)



# APALRC Celebrates Ten Years of Dedicated Legal Service and Advocacy in the Region, and Honors its Founders, Founding Board Members, and First Executive Director

On November 18, 2008, APALRC celebrated its tenth anniversary at the Equality Center in Washington, D.C. The event provided an opportunity for APALRC supporters to meet the organization's new executive director, Myron Dean Quon, founders, board members, staff, and a decade's worth of law student volunteers. The event also honored APALRC's first executive director, Jayne Park, for her visionary leadership and dedication for the past eight years, and recognized one of its founders, John C. Yang, for his tireless work and generous contributions.



The event was attended by over 100 guests and sponsored by 35 law firm, corporate, and individual sponsors. Through this event, APALRC was able to raise over \$50,000, which will be used to assist many low-income, limited English proficient Asian Americans in the region.



(Above Left: Theodore Chuang, APALRC Board Chair; Jayne Park, APALRC's First Executive Director; and Sunil Mansukhani, APALRC Board Member)

(Above Right: Chan Park, APALRC Co-Founder; Sunil Mansukhani; Theodore Chuang; John C. Yang, APALRC Co-Founder; and Deepa Iyer, APALRC Founding Board Member)

In the summer of 1997, several Asian American law students at the Georgetown University Law Center began working on a proposal to start a multilingual legal referral service to help address the legal needs of Asian Pacific Americans in the D.C. metropolitan region. With \$500 in seed money to help pay for a phone, basic office supplies, and some simple brochures, the students approached the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of the District of Columbia (APABA-DC) and the South Asian Bar Association (SABA) to ask for their support. APABA-DC and SABA quickly and enthusiastically threw their support behind this effort, and in the fall of 1997, a small core group of law students and volunteer attorneys, including John Yang, formed the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC).  
  
The APALRC held a kick-off reception in late January 1998, and first opened its hotline to calls in early February 1998. For nearly three years, the APALRC operated as an entirely volunteer organization with no paid staff, and a Board comprised of law students and attorneys from APABA and SABA. Initially, the APALRC was housed in a small side office at the Georgetown University Law Center with two donated phones. Despite these humble beginnings, the core group of founding students and attorneys agreed in 1997 that their dream was to create a regional organization with a full complement of attorneys providing multilingual direct services and leading advocacy efforts for the Asian Pacific American community.  
  
- Chan Park, APALRC co-founder

## APALRC Tenth Anniversary Celebration Sponsors

<p><b>Platinum</b></p> <p>Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett &amp; Dunner LLP Kirkland &amp; Ellis LLP Latham &amp; Watkins LLP Wiley Rein LLP</p> <p><b>Gold</b></p> <p>Alston &amp; Bird, LLP Crowell &amp; Moring LLP DLA Piper Venable LLP White &amp; Case LLP WilmerHale</p> <p><b>Silver</b></p> <p>APABA-DC Cohen Milstein Sellers &amp; Toll PLLC Greenberg &amp; Traurig, LLP Hogan &amp; Hartson Howrey LLP Kelley Drye &amp; Warren, LLP Marriott International, Inc. McDermott Will &amp; Emery LLP Winston &amp; Strawn LLP</p>	<p><b>Benefactor</b></p> <p>Eng Garcia Real Estate Group Jenny Yang, Esq. Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher &amp; Flom LLP Wake Law Firm</p> <p><b>Advocate</b></p> <p>Asian American Justice Center American University Washington College of Law Ben Wu, Esq. &amp; Teresa Lee, Esq. Deloitte &amp; Touche, LLP Dr. Chung Shu Yang George Qi, Esq. George Washington University Law School George Wu, Esq. &amp; Lynne Chiao Georgetown University Law Center Jack H. Olender &amp; Associates, PC</p> <p><b>Friend</b></p> <p>Nueva Vista Group LLP Stein McEwen &amp; Bui LLP</p>
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## APALRC Holds VAWA Trainings for Pro Bono Attorneys to Assist limited-English Proficient Asian American Domestic Violence Victims

This year, in partnership with the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland and the Administrative Office of the Courts, APALRC held domestic violence trainings to recruit, train, and mentor a corps of pro bono attorneys to assist limited English proficient Asian American domestic violence victims file VAWA self-petitions. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) enables domestic violence victims to file self-petitions to obtain legal permanent resident status independent of their abusers.



*Pictured: APALRC Pro Bono Attorney Training held at Bacon, Thornton & Palmer, L.L.P. on Aug. 6, 2008*

*Left to Right: Claire Kim (Bacon, Thornton & Palmer, L.L.P.), Kathy Kwak (APALRC Staff Attorney), Pooja Regmi (APALRC Staff Attorney), Marianne Hendricks (Legal Aid Bureau), Nancy Chung (National Asian American Women's Forum), and Laureen Pak*

### What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults and adolescents use against their intimate partner.

While domestic violence happens to both men and women, 85% of domestic violence victims are women.

As part of this project, APALRC has developed a brochure about VAWA immigration relief and translated the document into Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Urdu, and Vietnamese. These brochures were distributed to other legal service organizations, domestic violence service providers (including shelters), community-based organizations, and faith-based communities.

### Distinguishing Dynamics of API Domestic Violence

- Multiple abusers in the home: perpetrators may include mothers-, fathers-, brothers-, sisters-in-law, ex-or new wives, adult siblings or other members of a woman's natal family.
- Internalized devaluation and victim-blaming are that much deeper when there are multiple perpetrators.
- Gender roles are tightly prescribed and more rigid, minimizing female agency and shrinking the space within which women and men can re-define those roles.

Since APALRC launched its *Asian American Domestic Violence Project* through the award of an Equal Justice Works Fellowship in 2004, APALRC staff attorneys have worked closely with our social services partners like Asian Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP), Boat People SOS (BPSOS), Korean Community Service Center (KCSC), and FAITH (a social service agency that addresses needs of families in Northern Virginia, particularly Muslim families) to address social service needs of our clients in addition to the legal services we provide, including civil protection orders, spousal and child support, child custody and visitation, divorce and immigration law related to domestic violence.

For more information, please contact Marita Etcubañez ([marita@apalrc.org](mailto:marita@apalrc.org)) or Pooja Regmi ([pooja.regmi@apalrc.org](mailto:pooja.regmi@apalrc.org)).

### Threats to immigration status are part of the pattern of abuse

- Threats of deportation, loss of children, making false declarations to the INS about her, withholding/hiding passports and other important documents, not proceeding with green card applications.
- After marriage in the home country women come here and sometimes have to contend with another partner her husband has: her vulnerable immigration status forces her to accept whatever arrangements he insists upon.

-Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

### Client Highlight



*(Left: Pooja Regmi, APALRC Staff Attorney, with a former client)*

*I am thankful to the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center for opening doors in the United States. I came to the U.S. five years ago from Japan ... against my family's wishes, but I felt strongly about marrying my children's dad. However, he abused me and life became very difficult for me. Life was more difficult because of language, cultural difference, lack of family support, and lack of friends.*

*At the time I decided I needed to get out of my marriage, I had two sons who were seven months and two years old. ... I had no money, no job, no home where I felt safe and no immigration status. I felt helpless. ...*

*When APALRC helped me file my [Violence Against Women Act] petition, it opened a door for me and I got a big step toward a better future. I have gone to school, graduated and gotten a license as a nail technician. I am working at a spa and salon as a nail technician and am able to support myself and my two babies. Without APALRC's help, I do not know what I would have done.*

## APALRC's Language Access Complaint Triggers Historic Ruling Against Metropolitan Police Department

In an important step toward ensuring equal access for limited-English speakers, APALRC filed the District of Columbia's first language access complaint against the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and received one of the country's only victorious language access rulings against a law enforcement agency. In response to the complaint, the D.C. Office of Human Rights (OHR) found MPD to be noncompliant with the D.C.

Language Access Act. The D.C. Language Access Act mandates that D.C. government agencies provide the public equal access to government programs, service and information, regardless of language ability, through interpretation and translation of all vital services and documents.



"The police came to my house at three o'clock in the morning and arrested me in front of my son. I had no idea what was going on. While I was detained for four days, I worried about my family and how we would make a living," explained Mr. Jong Yeol Lee of his ordeal at the APALRC press conference at OCA National on Thursday, December 18, 2008.

"The DC Office of Human Rights decision upheld the law and we are extremely pleased," said Myron Dean Quon, APALRC Executive Director. "We are thrilled for Mr. Lee — at the end of the day this case is about the requirement that government agencies provide equal access to limited- or non-English speaking people."

As a co-founder and fiscal agent of the D.C. Language Access Coalition, APALRC has advocated for full and equal access to D.C. government programs and services for D.C.'s estimated 39,000 non- or limited-English speakers, particularly in the areas of health, welfare, education, housing, and employment benefits. APALRC's collaboration with the D.C. Language Access Coalition, an alliance of over 25 community-based and civil rights organizations, led to passage of the D.C. Language Access Act of 2004.

### Mr. Lee's Testimony

*I am a Korean speaking, permanent resident, who work as a mechanic in the District of Columbia. Near the end of the year last year, the police came into my house at 3:00am and arrested me in front of my family.*

*I was so surprised and confused, and also felt embarrassed to be seen like that in front of my son.*

*In Korean, I asked the police officer why I was being arrested, as I have a very limited English ability, but did not get any answer. I felt helpless, so I said, "I need Korea people," to request a Korean interpreter, but was not provided one. I was detained for four days at a detention center. Put in a place where I couldn't communicate with anyone to find out what was going on, I felt anxious and worried. I was not informed of any of due process rights, including my right to counsel. Then, I was transferred to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). Again, I asked for a Korean interpreter, but was not provided one. After a few hours of being there, the police told me it was okay for me to go and gave me a document that said, "Release Without Charge." Since it was not translated into Korean, I didn't understand what it said or what it all meant, but was relieved to know that I could return home to my family. After I got home, I felt deeply disturbed by everything that had happened to me, and sought help. I contacted the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center, and after a few months of research and meetings, Ms. Firozvi helped me file a complaint against MPD. As a result, DC Office of Human Rights found MPD noncompliant with the DC Language Access Act. Although this does not erase the fact that I was detained for four days without having being charged, or the anxiety and worry my family went through, I am thankful to APALRC for helping me regain my right and dignity even by a little bit.*

### Implications of the Language Access Complaint Ruling

With the District's nearly 40,000 non-English speaking residents, this administrative complaint process will continue to serve as an effective tool to provide equal access to government services. From a direct service standpoint, APALRC works to file administrative Language Access Complaints against District government agencies that do not comply with the Act. Additionally, these administrative complaints can lead to larger federal Title VI complaints.

From an advocacy standpoint, APALRC serves as a member of the D.C. Language Access Coalition. The Coalition is charged, through the 2004 D.C. Language Access Act, to be the third-party, non-partisan, consultative entity that monitors and holds District government entities accountable for implementation of the Act. The Coalition works to ensure that District residents and workers who speak Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, French and Amharic have equal access to the most essential government benefits and services including food stamps, Medicaid, health care, unemployment benefits, job training programs, public education, fire and emergency services, the police department and mental health services. Members of the Coalition use multiple methods, from community education to direct legal services, to raise awareness about individual rights to language access. As a member of the Coalition, APALRC works to raise that awareness within the Asian community in the D.C. metropolitan area, and will continue to work on behalf of and represent Asian Pacific Islander individuals in these efforts.

- Nadia Firozvi, APALRC Staff Attorney (nadia.firozvi@apalrc.org)



"This ruling is extremely significant not only because it is one of the first of its kind in the nation but because it puts the spotlight on the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and D.C. government, particularly the Office of Human Rights, to ensure the execution of the extra compliance measures now placed on MPD to decrease the discrimination that Mr. Lee had the misfortune to face."

- Jennifer Deng-Pickett, D.C. Language Access Coalition Director.

A recent study conducted by the Equal Rights Center in Washington, D.C. found that five District government agencies acted in non-compliance with the Language Access Act 86.9% of the time.

- *Failure to Communicate: Report of Language Barriers in D.C. Government Services*, the Equal Rights Center (October 2007)



## APALRC Launches the Housing and Community Justice Project in Fall 2008

APALRC launched its *Housing and Community Justice Project* in September, 2008 to focus on affordable housing, tenants' rights, and equitable community and economic development. The project was started by new staff attorney Parag Khandhar, a recent American University Washington College of Law graduate who came to APALRC with 10 years of experience working in the Asian American communities in New York City. Through this project, APALRC will provide direct legal services, community outreach and education, and legal support to low-income and limited-English proficient (LEP) Asian American communities in the D.C. Metropolitan area.

The project connects community members to existing services and represents community members in a range of areas including eviction defense and unlawful conduct of landlords, fair housing discrimination, and issues with access to affordable and government-subsidized housing. The project also monitors and engages land use, zoning, and planning processes to preserve affordable housing, prevent discriminatory impact on Asian American community members, and protect the neighborhoods in which we live and work.

In addition, the project works with and supports groups of low-income and limited-English proficient Asian American community members and other stakeholders who are seeking collective ways of addressing shared concerns. The project offers transactional legal advice and representation to tenants' associations, merchants' associations, and other community-based organizations to facilitate community building and support the growth of economic, social, and political power in local immigrant communities. To this end, the project will use numerous strategies that include: asset mapping, collaborative and facilitative problem solving, negotiation, advocacy, and litigation.

The *Housing and Community Justice Project* was started with the support of a number of sources, including a technical assistance grant by the National Coalition of Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD). The initial focus of the project was to partner with the D.C. Language Access Coalition, Housing Counseling Services, and the Asian Senior Center to provide tenants' rights education and support to the primarily low-income and LEP Chinese seniors in a Section-8 project-based building in D.C. Chinatown. Since that time, the project has assisted the tenants to organize a tenants' association and elect a board of directors, who have retained the APALRC as legal counsel. Their tenants' association has incorporated, now runs regular board meetings, and has begun a grassroots campaign to fundraise and build their membership. The board feels more empowered than they did as individuals, and are working to represent and protect the interests of their membership and build community. They are also participating in a broader Chinatown "cultural development" process initiated by the D.C. Office of Planning.

Through this project, APALRC will continue to reach out to and collaborate with Asian immigrant communities throughout D.C., metropolitan Maryland, and Northern Virginia to provide them with information and resources about affordable housing, tenants' rights and community development. APALRC will also continue to identify collaborations and partnerships to better facilitate this work. For example, to gather data about Asian American renters and the threat of the foreclosure crisis, we requested that the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) add 2 new housing questions to their voter exit survey, which was administered to nearly 17,000 voters in 12 states. In addition, APALRC was recently asked to join the Montgomery County Tenants' Advocacy Work Group, which was formed by the County Executive to make recommendations to strengthen renter security and quality of living.

For more information, please contact Parag Khandhar ([parag.khandhar@apalrc.org](mailto:parag.khandhar@apalrc.org)).

### Staff Highlight

**Parag Khandhar** graduated from the American University Washington College of Law (WCL) in 2008. During law school, Parag interned at CASA of Maryland, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, and the Legal Aid Justice Center's Immigrant Advocacy Project. He was a student attorney in the WCL Community and Economic Development Law Clinic, where he worked with nonprofit organizational clients on issues ranging from choice of business form and tax-exempt status, risk management, and community intervention in redevelopment plans that affected affordable housing. In 2007, he received the Anheuser-Busch Norman Y. Mineta Fellowship from the APABA Educational Fund (AEF) and the PSLawNet/NALP Pro Bono Publico Award for his work as a founding organizer of the Public Interest Student Coalition (PISC), a non-hierarchical student collective that organizes WCL's public interest students.

Parag comes to APALRC with 10 years of experience in the Asian American community of NYC. He oversaw a number of community art projects as Program Director at the Asian American Writers' Workshop. He then led the Asian American Federation as an Assistant Director for Policy and Planning, where he lead a community-based Census 2000 advocacy campaign and data campaign. After September 11th, Parag managed the Federation's extensive case management and client advocacy programs in a satellite office in Queens, where 6 case managers worked with hundreds of Asian American workers, residents, and family members affected by September 11th and its aftermath. In Spring 2008, Parag was an adjunct lecturer at the University of Maryland College Park Asian American Studies Program, where he co-taught a class on South Asian American communities.

## APALRC Volunteers Monitor Election Poll Sites and Conduct Multilingual Exit Poll Surveys in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. through AALDEF's Asian American Election Protection Project

On November 4, 2008, APALRC spearheaded the local efforts of the Asian American Election Protection Project, through which the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) dispatched over 1,400 attorneys, law students and community volunteers to over 130 polling sites in states with large Asian American populations, including New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan, Texas, Nevada, and Louisiana, to monitor elections and conduct a nonpartisan multilingual exit poll.

For Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., APALRC intern, Wendy Lau coordinated hundreds of volunteer attorneys, law students, and community members who covered close to 80 poll sites, where there had been a surge in newly-registered Asian American voters, high numbers of voters with limited-English proficiency, or where Asian Americans have reported voting barriers or intimidation in recent elections.

The purpose of the poll monitoring was to check voting sites for compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the Help America Vote Act. Volunteer attorneys checked to see whether Asian-language voting assistance was provided and whether required signs stating voter's rights and instructions were adequately posted. The goal of the nonpartisan exit poll surveys was to collect data and analyze patterns of political and civic participation among Asian American voters, including top reasons for their choices, party affiliations, whether they are first-time voters, English proficiency and the need for Asian-language voting assistance, and specific problems encountered at the polls. The surveys were conducted in 12 Asian languages, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Tagalog, Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and Gujarati.



(Left: Betty Luan, APALRC staff, conducting an exit poll survey in Chinese)

### Volunteer Quote

"When speaking with the lady from AU's law school, she too noted how the idea of protecting the vote was a notable cause that transcends racial categories.

She agreed that making sure that voting conditions are fair is a right for all people, whether they are APA or not."

### Asian American Election Protection Project Preliminary Report on Nov. 4, 2008

Below are preliminary data reported by AALDEF on the day of the election...

#### **Number of Complaints Received through Multilingual Voter Hotline from 12 States:**

**Over 900**

#### **Number of Asian American Voters Surveyed through Exit Poll in 12 States:**

**Almost 17,000**

#### **Preliminary List of Voting Incidents:**

- **Names of Registered Asian Americans Not on Voter Rolls;**
- **Racist Remarks and Improper Poll Worker Conduct;**
- **Inadequate Numbers of Asian-Language Interpreters;**
- **Improper Requests for Identification;**
- **Broken Voting Machines; and**
- **Insufficient Number of Poll Workers**

**An improper poll worker conduct was reported at a poll site in Annandale, VA, where one poll worker told Korean American voters which candidates to vote for.**



## As Crime Rates Rise Over the Holiday Season, APALRC CVAP Project Provides Crucial Victim Services to the Limited-English Proficient Asian Americans in the District of Columbia

Within the last couple of months, there have been reports of a substantial increase in the volume of Asian crime victims. There were numerous robbery cases where Asian individuals have been specifically targeted. Many people have been assaulted during these crimes, and have been seriously injured. Asian individuals are often targeted in Chinatown or in the Florida Market area in Washington, D.C. because the Asian community is known to carry large sums of cash. More often than not, this is true of individuals that frequent the Florida Market area where many wholesalers only accept cash as a form of payment.

With the recent (and most likely steady) increase in crime, the need for the Crime Victims Assistance Partnership (CVAP) Project becomes more evident. As the only organization that provides direct services to Asian crime victims in the District, APALRC helps individual victims, many of whom are limited-English proficient, with the process of applying for crime victim compensation, navigating through the criminal justice system, and collaborating with law enforcement to incarcerate the perpetrators. With the help of APALRC's legal interpreters and translators, CVAP staff is able to provide the necessary assistance in over 14 different Asian languages.

### Case Highlight

Ms. J's purse was snatched by two men, and as they drove away, her arm was caught in the strap of her purse. Ms. J was dragged for two blocks before she was released. As a result, Ms. J incurred serious nerve damage on the right hand of her body. Ms. J was admitted to the hospital but immediately left, fearing that medical costs would be too much for her to afford.

APALRC staff convinced Ms. J to return to the hospital to receive the proper medical treatment and assisted with filing of her compensation claims.

Ms. J's application was approved and she will not have to pay for the medical bills she incurred as a result of the crime. Upon hearing the news, Ms. J said, "Thank you for your help. Thank you for caring about me."

Originally launched by the Chinatown Service Center in 2001 and adopted by APALRC in 2006, CVAP Project educates, supports, and assists victims of crime with the financial burden brought about by violent crimes that occur in the area. Through CVAP, Asian crime victims are able to receive reimbursements or payments for their medical and other necessary services. APALRC holds monthly meetings with its CVAP community partners, including the Asian Liaison Unit of the Metropolitan Police Department, D. C. Crime Victim Compensation Office, and D.C. Mayor's Office on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, to study crime trends and discuss effective ways to assist Asian crime victims.

With such collaborative efforts, APALRC was able to assist many victims this year.

For more information regarding our CVAP program, please contact Tina Pham ([tina.pham@apalrc.org](mailto:tina.pham@apalrc.org)).

### Who is eligible?

Victims of certain crimes that include **murder, negligent homicide, certain types of assault, burglary, stalking, and threats** are eligible. Also covered are the victims' family or household members, guardians, dependents or survivors, and people who legally assume the obligation or voluntarily pay for a victim's expenses are eligible for compensation. In addition, persons injured while attempting to assist a crime victim may be eligible as well. An eligibility "checklist" follows:

- Victim has suffered personal injury or death in the District of Columbia
- A secondary victim is a close family or household member of the victim
- A police report was filed within 7 days of the crime (In cases of sexual assault, obtaining a sexual assault exam is sufficient. In cases of domestic violence, obtaining a Civil Protection Order is sufficient and in cases of cruelty to children, the filing of a neglect petition will satisfy the report requirement).
- Law enforcement agencies were reasonably provided with information and all necessary cooperation was given.
- Application must be filed with the Compensation Program within one year of the crime, or one year of learning of the Program.

### Which expenses are covered?

- Medical treatment and medications
- Mental health counseling (up to \$6,000 for children and \$3,000 for adults)
- Funeral and burial costs (up to \$6,000)
- Loss of wages (80% of net income up to one year or \$10,000-if employed at the time of the crime-and supported by disability statement from physician)
- Cleaning of a crime scene (up to \$1,000)
- Replacement value of clothing held as evidence (\$100)
- Reimbursement for car rental while vehicle is being held as evidence (\$2,000)
- Temporary emergency shelter (up to \$3,000) and moving expenses (up to \$1,500) where necessary for the health and safety of the victim
- Windows, doors, and lock changes for the safety of the victim (up to \$1,000)

## APALRC Challenge Campaign

In the summer of 2006, APALRC launched its Challenge Campaign with a generous gift of \$75,000 from Mr. John C. Yang, APALRC co-founder and Consulting Counsel at Wiley Rein LLP. This fundraising effort is called the Challenge Campaign because APALRC wants to encourage our friends and supporters to match Mr. Yang's contribution over a three-year period. Although a support of any amount is appreciated, an individual gift of \$100 or more will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to \$75,000, by Mr. Yang.

"To me, especially as a lawyer, giving back to the community is a moral obligation in many respects," said Mr. Yang during a brief interview with APALRC. "I have been involved with APALRC since its inception in 1997. There were a number of very excellent legal service providers that already existed. But there was a gap with the Asian American communities. APALRC really stands out because of its collaborative approach with the other organizations, in addition to providing much needed linguistically and culturally appropriate legal services to low-income, limited-English proficient Asian American in the region," added Mr. Yang.

When asked about his motivation for such a generous contribution to APALRC, Mr. Yang responded, "I was inspired by a friend who is a partner at a large law firm in Boston. Seeing what that organization was able to do with his gift inspired me to think more actively about the notion of paying it forward. These donations can help small organizations reach a level they have never been at before. At first, I was very reticent about making my contribution public. But just as I was inspired by my friend, I wanted to encourage others to do something similar...because that's when we can bring about positive social changes, not to mention the rewarding feeling we get as having taken part in a worthy cause."

Thanks to each and every one of our generous supporters, APALRC is proud to report that, in 2008, we were able to handle over 350 cases in various areas of law, including employment law, family law, housing law, immigration law, and Language Access Act, for the Washington D.C. metropolitan region's limited-English proficient Asian Americans, who sought legal assistance through our multilingual Helpline or referrals from our community partners.

"John's gift is profound, and the gifts that all of you may be able to give will be equally profound. Individual giving in America is 80 percent of all giving. Sometimes small community-based organizations go first to institutional funders, foundations, and corporations, but in order to grow, they need individual support," said Ms. Julie L. Rogers, President of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, at the Challenge Campaign launch event.

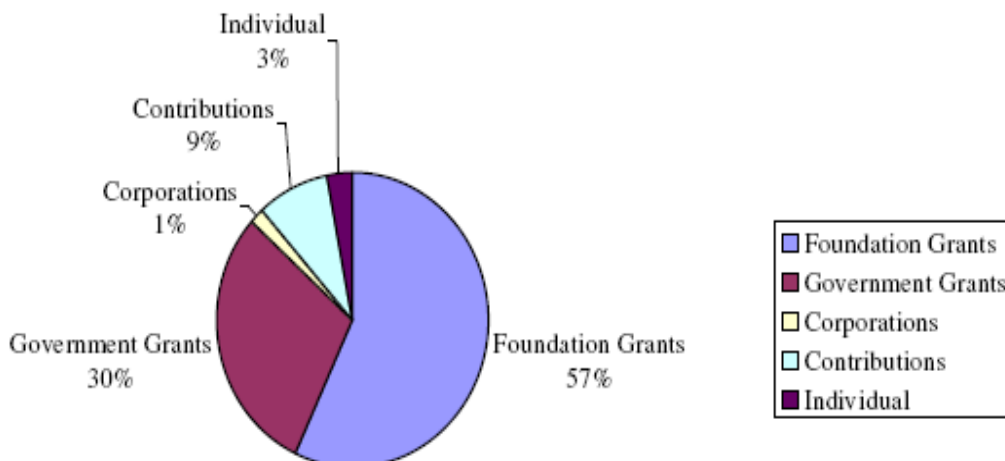
Myron Dean Quon, APALRC Executive Director, shared his goal of increasing APALRC's individual giving to ensure the strong and stable financial state that APALRC has been known for continues into the next decade: "APALRC has been very fortunate to have strong and steady government and foundation support over the past decade. While this has helped our organization grow significantly over the years, I'd like to strongly encourage our friends and supporters to consider making financial contributions so that we can increase our individual giving by five-times next year. We take great pride and joy in our work everyday and want to continue our efforts to ensure that language and cultural barriers do not prevent so many low-income, limited-English proficient Asian Americans from seeking justice that they deserve and are entitled to."

For more information regarding our Challenge Campaign or event sponsorships, please contact Aeda Chung, Marketing & Donor Relations Coordinator, at [aeda.chung@apalrc.org](mailto:aeda.chung@apalrc.org).



"To me, especially as a lawyer, giving back to the community is a moral obligation in many respects."  
- John C. Yang, APALRC co-founder and Consulting Counsel at Wiley Rein LLP

**APALRC 2008 Income Distribution**





## Volunteer Highlight: Where Are They Now?



(Above: Judy Tseng)

**On APALRC Experience:** “Back when I was a student, [APALRC] organized training sessions for all the law students who wanted to volunteer, and it was very fun and useful. There was a funny skit during training, where Mariju Bofill, an AU law student, had to pretend to be a clueless Filipino woman calling up the LRC for the first time, and she and the other student had to demonstrate the wrong way to handle a call. Through the training, we learned how to properly and professionally answer calls, assess the problem, and figure out what we could offer the person in need. Nowadays, I practice civil litigation as a solo practitioner, and the skills we learned as student volunteers for the LRC are the same skills I use everyday with clients and potential clients.

Another memory I have of those early LRC days is a client that John Yang and I tried to assist in a traffic citation issue. [...] On a Sat. night, we drove out to a sr. citizen's home in Virginia and met with a Chinese man who kept insisting that John go to traffic court with him. I really don't know how John juggled these demands along with being on the partnership track at a large law firm, but he somehow managed it all with finesse.

It is so wonderful to see that the seeds sown by the LRC founders have sprouted and regenerated into a thriving, full-service agency, serving many clients who are in need.”

*Judy Tseng is the founder and owner of the Wake Law Office. Born in Chicago and raised in Georgia, she completed her undergraduate studies at the University of California at Berkeley and received her law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center, where she received the Asian Pacific American Bar Association Educational Fund Fellowship and was an editor of the Georgetown International Environmental Law Review.*

*Upon graduating from law school, Ms. Tseng practiced with a Washington, D.C. area law firm, handling a diverse array of cases, including a complex business fraud and conspiracy lawsuit, medical malpractice, employment discrimination, and automobile torts cases, and counseling to the local business community. In May 2001, Ms. Tseng joined the law firm of Kurtz & Blum in Raleigh, North Carolina, where as the sole civil litigation attorney she handled workers' compensation, employment law, civil rights, personal injury, family law, professional malpractice, and contract cases. In May 2003, she joined the Law Office of Faith Herndon in Durham, focusing on employment law, workers' compensation, SSDI appeals, family law, and general civil litigation.*

*Ms. Tseng is active in many community organizations, serving as a current board member and the 2002-2003 President of the National Association of Asian American Professionals-North Carolina, and as founder of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association-North Carolina chapter. She is a board member of the Skating Club of North Carolina and Durham/Orange Women Attorneys. She is also an active member of the North Carolina Bar Association Minorities in the Profession and Hmong Legal Assistance sections, Triangle Area Chinese American Society, and the Durham County Bar Association. Ms. Tseng has further volunteered her time speaking about legal careers with students at Meredith College, Duke University, UNC-Chapel Hill, the North Carolina Bar Association high school conference, and the National Black Law Students Association conference. She has spoken about legal issues with the IBM Diversity Group, and at the NAAAP-NC Financial Seminar, Ask-a-Lawyer Day in Hickory, and the 2005 APA Community Forum.*

“Yuri Kochiyama, a civil rights activist who was interned during WW2, once said in a speech that it was her sincere hope that Asian Americans continue to side with the most oppressed.

I am sure all of us have stories of how our families, parents, or ancestors somehow made their way to America, and how they became acclimated thanks to the help and kindness of others more privileged.

My father showed up in Birmingham, Alabama in 1971 with \$100 and limited English, but there were many people of all races who helped my parents learn American culture, improve their English, and figure out life in America.

Though most of us are the privileged, so-called model minority, with our advanced degrees and command of the English language, it is our duty and calling to assist those Asian immigrants who need a helping hand.”

-Judy Tseng, former APALRC law student volunteer, at the APALRC Tenth Anniversary Celebration Reception on Nov. 18, 2008

### Special Thanks to APALRC 2008 Law Student Volunteers!

<b>American University</b>	Joanne Chan	Thanh Nguyen
<b>Washington College of Law</b>	Aditi Chaudhuri	Amisha Patel
Sung Chang	Tracey Fung	Yanfei Shen
Inho Hwang	Pauline Ha	Chee Yuen Hung
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Helen Lee	Mahwash Malik	<b>David A. Clarke School of Law</b>
Andrew Lim	Cynthia Liu	Sungseok Han
Keith Nguyen	Lew Jan Olowski	<b>Summer Law Clerks</b>
Shiwali Patel	<b>The George Washington University</b>	Feraz Ashraf, University of Toledo College of Law
Chang Wook Shin	<b>Law School</b>	Dorothy Hwang, American University Washington College of Law
Elizabeth Sohn	Tracy Badua	Jenny Lee, University of Maryland School of Law
Allen Soohoo	Nichole Cadiente	Christine Nguyen, Thomas M. Cooley Law School
Aditya Surendan	Kyle Chan	<b>Interns</b>
<b>George Mason University School of Law</b>	Richard Han	Brandon Mita, Howard University School of Law
Hyojin Bae	Kao-Yu Hsu	Wendy Lau, The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law
<b>Georgetown University Law Center</b>	Phone Le	
Juhi Aggarwal	Jacqueline Lee	
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	Jennifer Liu	

## APALRC Funders

The generous support of our individual donors and funders ensure that APALRC can continue to provide much-needed legal services to the low-income, limited-English proficient Asian American communities in the region. We would like to acknowledge the following 2008 funders for their support of our mission:

**Altria Group, Inc. c/o National Network to End Domestic Violence**

**The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region**

**D.C. Bar Foundation**

**D.C. Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

**D.C. One Fund**

**D.C. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Office of Victim Services**

**Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation**

**Exxon Mobil Corporation**

**Freddie Mac Foundation**

**Legal Services of Northern Virginia**

**Maryland Legal Services Corporation**

**Montgomery County Community Foundation**

**Montgomery County Council**

**Montgomery County Maryland Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Division of Community Development**

**Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation**

**National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (NCAPACD)**

**The Pew Charitable Trusts**

**Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, Inc.**

**Starbucks Memorial Fund**

**Target Foundation**

**United Methodist Church General Commission on Religion and Race**

**United Way of the National Capital Area/CFC**

**Virginia Law Foundation**

**The Washington Post**



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### How to Get Involved...

There are a number of ways to get involved with the exciting work of APALRC, and we would love your participation!

- **Currently attending a law school...?**

Consider volunteering your time and language ability through our Helpline! You will interview callers and assist them with matters involving domestic violence, workplace rights, family law, immigration law, and other legal issues. You will also conduct legal research and write legal memoranda under staff supervision to provide legal advice or appropriate referrals to Helpline callers. For more information, please contact Nadia Firozvi ([nadia.firozvi@apalrc.org](mailto:nadia.firozvi@apalrc.org)) or Betty Luan ([betty.luan@apalrc.org](mailto:betty.luan@apalrc.org)).

- **Fluent in an Asian Language...?**

You can use your language skill to interpret at attorney-client meetings and court hearings, and translate affidavits and other legal documents. You can also participate in our community outreach efforts, including interpreting at community meetings, and translating outreach materials. For information about our training schedule, interview process, and testing, please contact Betty Luan ([betty.luan@apalrc.org](mailto:betty.luan@apalrc.org)).

- **Attorney Interested in Cases Involving Asian Americans in the Region...?**

If you have a background in any of our legal areas, including family law, immigration law, employment law, and housing law, and would like to provide pro bono assistance to some of our Helpline callers, please contact our Director of Legal Services, Marita Etcubanez ([marita@apalrc.org](mailto:marita@apalrc.org)). As we are able to provide trained legal interpreters and translators for your meetings and legal documents, bilingual ability is not required!

- **Want to be Informed of Critical Issues Affecting Asian Americans...?**

Please sign up for our e-newsletter through our home page.

- **Want to be Make Financial Contributions through Individual Donations and/or Event Sponsorships...?**

Please contact our Marketing & Donor Relations Coordinator, Aeda Chung ([aeda.chung@apalrc.org](mailto:aeda.chung@apalrc.org)).

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## APALRC Challenge Campaign

Help Us Ensure the Legal and Civil Rights of Asian Americans in the Washington, D.C. Metro Region!

YES, I/We want to help meet the APALRC Challenge Campaign with a tax-deductible contribution of:

\$5,000 per year for 3 years—Campaign Cabinet

\$500 per year for 3 years—Sponsor

\$2,500 per year for 3 years—Benefactor

\$250 per year for 3 years—Leader

\$1,000 per year for 3 years—Patron

\$100 per year for 3 years—Friend

Other amount\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year for 3 years

One time gift\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*A minimum \$100 gift is required to qualify for challenge match funds. Please mail this form to the APALRC's D.C. address.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) is tax exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and gifts to the APALRC are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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