



# THE BONSAI NEWS

Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Inc. • Fall 2000

## APHCV TO START SCHOOL-BASED CLINIC

Local high school youth will soon be linked to APHCV's REAL Youth Center and Clinic through a collaborative school-based clinic project entitled "Youth Linked for Optimum Health" (YLOH).

Funded in part by grants from the Crail Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, YLOH is a partnership between APHCV and nearby John Marshall High School which began late last year when representatives from Marshall contacted APHCV and asked for assistance with a school-based clinic.

"By establishing a school-based clinic at Marshall and linking it to our youth clinic and after school programs, Marshall students will have access to quality, culturally sensitive health care and other support services that currently do not exist at the school," said Kazue Shibata, APHCV Executive Director.

"Our goal is to address not only medical needs of youth, but also social support by providing them a safe and productive after-school environment," she said.

Services at the school-based clinic, which is set to open this Fall, will include general health assessments, physical exams, disease screening and treatment, prevention, gap immunization, HIV testing and counseling and health education. Medications will be dispensed as well. In addition, the students will be assisted with specialty care through referral specialists and case managed. APHCV will also provide outreach and assistance for the youth and their families to become aware of public health insurance programs such as MediCal and Healthy Families.

Initially, the school-based clinic will be open two half-day sessions a week. Clinic hours will be expanded accordingly as the demand increases and the resources are raised.

Among Marshall's 4,230 students, many fall in one or more of the following social characteristics: From low income and linguistically isolated families, live in high crime areas, live without parents, spend after school hours without adult supervision, are referrals from the probation office, and are sexually active.

Marshall students will be linked with REAL Youth Center activities including group excursions, movie nights, arts and crafts and computer classes. These activities will be posted and introduced at the school-based clinic as safe, alternative after-school activities.



### BOARD PROFILE

## Kei Kokubun: A Lifetime of Community Service

By Soji Kashiwagi



**K**ei Kokubun calls it a miracle. At 15, he was sitting in a WWII internment camp for Japanese Americans in the middle of the Arizona desert with no money, little hope and without his father, a Christian minister who had been arrested by the FBI and detained at a separate facility.

His dream of becoming a minister just like his father looked pretty bleak. All he could do was pray.

He was born in Calexico, California in 1925. His parents, the Rev. Jingoro and Iso

Kokubun, organized a Christian Church and a Japanese language school in both Calexico and El Centro. They served Imperial Valley's Japanese community from 1920 to 1942. From this upbringing, Kei Kokubun was inspired to follow in his father's footsteps.

"Becoming a minister was still my goal in life if I could find the financial resources for my education," he said. "Realizing that the fall semester was soon approaching, my prayers became more earnest."

And then, a miracle happened.

"On August 10, 1944 when I returned to my barrack after work I got a letter from a man I didn't know, who was from an organization I was not familiar with," said

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# AGENCY NEWS

## BUILDING UPDATE

Changes are taking place inside the Asian Pacific Health Care Venture.

After APHCV purchased its 20,000 sq.ft. medical facility from Kaiser Foundation Hospitals last June, renovations to the building—both upstairs and downstairs—have been either completed, are in-progress or still to come.

Part One of the renovations involved adding new walls and office space downstairs to accommodate the needs of APHCV's first floor tenant, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. Completed earlier this April, staff from Children's Hospital have moved in and will be occupying the space under a three-year lease.

Rental income raised from this lease agreement will go toward repaying two loans APHCV took out to purchase the building: One from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the other from State of California's Help II loan program.

Part Two of the renovations has been ongoing throughout the Summer and involves APHCV's office space on the second floor. What used to be about a dozen small, closet-sized changing rooms have been converted into several, larger staff offices. Other offices have been enlarged to accommodate APHCV's growing staff which is now over 50.

After this job is completed, Part Three will involve the renovation of the downstairs REAL Youth Center space, and upstairs corner-office space which will become the Youth Center's Los Angeles Times Computer Learning Center. Thanks to a recent grant from the Crail Johnson Foundation, the REAL Youth Center space downstairs will be converted into a youth clinic waiting/activity room, giving youth their own private place to hang out as they wait for their medical appointments.

## MEXICO BEACH VACATION DRAWING

Sueann Cho of Los Angeles was the lucky winner of APHCV's second annual Mexico Beach Vacation drawing held on Friday, August 4 at the staff's monthly meeting.

The drawing's grand prize included a seven night stay at a WorldMark Vacation resort and airfare for two from Los Angeles to Mexico.

"I've never won anything in my life," said a surprised Sueann Cho.

Proceeds from the drawing will go toward APHCV's expansion of services to eventually include dental, integrative, a comprehensive youth center and mental health services.

"I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this year's drawing," said Soji Kashiwagi, APHCV's Capital Campaign Coordinator. "The response this year was tremendous, and we really appreciate everyone's support."

Special thanks to APHCV's Nurse Practitioner Dominic Koh for once again donating his time-share beachfront resort/condo in Mexico so APHCV could hold this drawing.

Thanks also to APHCV Board members Dr. Thomas Yoshikawa, Miya Iwataki, Cheryl Fujino, Bill Watanabe and Chris Leong for their outstanding effort in selling tickets, as well as APHCV staff, particularly Kazue Shibata, Robert Marquez, Vicky Yin, Ketsuda Tongkul and Jhasmine Buack.

## KAZUE SHIBATA ELECTED PRESIDENT OF A3PCON

APHCV's Executive Director Kazue Shibata was recently elected President of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON), which is made up of 55 Asian and Pacific Islander organizations and hundreds of individuals concerned about API issues from throughout Southern California.

During her one-year term which began in July, Shibata will work toward defining and directing A3PCON's activities and policy priorities.

"The challenge for this year is the restructuring of A3PCON while maintaining its visibility in policy development to ensure access to health and human services in the API communities," said Shibata. ☛



They called themselves "The Perfect 10" and led by APHCV staff member Wipada "Bee" La (left), they captured first place and bragging rights until next year.

## BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Bowling on April Fools Day?

Thirty two teams from throughout the API community came together on Saturday, April 1 for APHCV's 2nd Annual Bowl-A-Thon 2000 at the Bahama Lanes in Pasadena.

In a spirited afternoon of strikes, spares and gutter balls, the team calling itself the "Perfect 10" (featuring APHCV staff member Bee La) took home first place honors and the championship perpetual trophy; the Asian American Drug Abuse Program's (AADAP) "Hyperactive" finished a close second and the Little Tokyo Service Center Community Development Corporation's "Team Thai Tea" took home the third place trophies.

In just its second year, APHCV Bowl-A-Thon was a sell-out, thanks to the participation of several teams from throughout Southern California's Asian Pacific Community.

"We'd like to extend a special thanks to all the organizations for their participation," said Kei Kokubun, President of APHCV'S Board. "I'd also like to thank all the sponsors and individuals who supported us through their donations."

Bowl-A-Thon sponsors and donors include: Cooper, Moss, Resnick, Spiegel, & Co., LLP (Lane Sponsor); Dr. Thomas Yoshikawa, APHCV Board Member (Prize Sponsor) LTSC CDC, Art Dulay, Dr. John Hoh, Charlie Issaranggura, Dr. Diana Lee and Chris Nichelson (Youth Sponsors); Albertson's Supermarket, Chan Dara Restaurant, Charlie's Printing, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, David Quinones, First Choice Fire Protection, Kaiser Permanente, Pacific Bell, Tubtim Siam Restaurant and Vons Supermarket (Door Prize Donors).

"I'd also like to thank our Bowl-A-Thon 2000 Planning Committee—Soji Kashiwagi, Dominic Koh, Michelle Kwong and Lulu Quinones—for doing a great job on this year's event."

Next year's Bowl-A-Thon is being planned for April, 2001.



# Oral Health: A Crisis of Neglect

By John Hoh, M.D., Medical Director, APHCV, Inc.

Imagine if you lost bits of your teeth, a piece at a time and felt helpless to do anything about it. Other healthier teeth fall out due to receding gums....

This is the horrifying reality for over 95% of our health center's patients. Shocking as it may seem, most of our patients cannot afford simple dental care. Most of these clients lack any insurance for such care. Many have major knowledge deficits in how to care for their teeth and gums leading to epidemic levels of severe dental disease.

If this were to happen to any other part of their body, most of us would run quickly for help. However, oral health neglect is a slow, insidious process happening over years instead of days. Because they don't have dental insurance and cannot afford private dental services, many APHCV patients have put off care unless the pain is unbearable. Many indigent parents are forced to sacrifice their own health care needs because of their immediate need of feeding their children. We see this necessary, but sad sacrifice very frequently in our predominantly Asian Pacific Islander patients.

## The Damage Done is Surprisingly Severe

Oral health disease including chronic gum disease has been linked with oral cancers, major infections, chronic pain, bone infections, stomach upset and even heart disease involving both heart valves and arteries. Pregnant women with severe dental disease are likely to have pre-term births. Strong links between chronic oral disease and certain lung diseases and some strokes have also been made.

More than one third of older adults lose all their teeth in America. This often leads to malnutrition and premature debility. The resulting disability can force loss of ability to

work, unwanted dependency on others, susceptibility to infections and even death. The sad thing is that much of this is preventable with appropriate care.

## This is Truly a Pervasive Problem

United States Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher recently released the first report on the country's oral health. It has been estimated that one third of children have untreated dental decay. Dental-related illnesses are the single most common childhood disease, seven times more common than hay fever. It is responsible for children losing over 50 million hours of schooling a year. Surprisingly, the report also shows that children in California have more than twice as much tooth decay as children nationwide.

"This report illustrates profound disparities that affect those without the knowledge or resources to achieve good oral care," according to Dr. Satcher. "Those who suffer the worst oral health include poor Americans, especially children and the elderly. Members of racial and ethnic groups also experience a disproportionate level of oral health problems," he said. While 44 million Americans lack health insurance, 108 million do not have dental insurance.

## Oral Health Problems are Epidemic among APHCV Clients

Most of our patients at APHCV are in the above at-risk groups. Sadly, Los Angeles County programs do not provide dental care for the neediest clients. In the coming years, our goal is to be able to develop a dental program at APHCV to help meet this desperate need. Funding this care for the indigent presents major obstacles but ways to provide this care needs to be explored. Your support is very much needed to help meet this desperate situation.

# MORE AGENCY NEWS

## GRACE NIXON VISITS APHCV

Grace Nixon of the Grace Nixon Foundation and a generous supporter of APHCV's Capital Campaign visited APHCV earlier this year. Along with a friend, Mrs. Nixon took a tour of the facilities and had lunch with her good friend Kei Kokubun and Kazue Shibata.

"It was pleasure for me to meet Mrs. Nixon and her friend," said Shibata. "Kei has always spoken very highly of Mrs. Nixon, and I was happy to talk to her in person and to thank her for her generosity."

## HALLOWEEN BALLROOM DANCE TO TAKE PLACE ON FRIDAY, OCT. 27

Frankenstein will be doing the rumba. The Wicked Witch will be waltzing. And dancers decked out in their best Halloween costumes will be gliding across the floor at APHCV's 2nd Annual Ballroom

Dance Party to take place on Friday, October 27 from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the After Five Ballroom Dance Studio in Burbank.

Featuring a buffet dinner, free dance lessons (from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.), door prizes and surprises, this year's event will also include a Halloween costume contest for the funniest, scariest and most original costumes. A benefit drawing will be held at the end of the evening.

All proceeds will benefit APHCV and its efforts to expand its culturally sensitive, language appropriate health care services for API communities in need from throughout the Los Angeles area.

Tickets for the Halloween Dance Party are \$20 (includes dinner). After Five is located at 121 North San Fernando Blvd. in Burbank. For tickets and reservations, please call 323/644-3880, extensions 44, 26 or 20.

# KEI KOKUBUN

From Page One

Kokubun, 74, APHCV's Board President.

At a Christian conference held in Denver, Colorado, a man named Jack Takayanagi had heard about a young Kei Kokubun who at age 12 had decided to make the ministry his life's work. His letter to Kokubun was from the United Christian Missionary Society of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and turned out to be a scholarship offer to attend Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

Kokubun's prayers had been answered!

"To this day, I still don't know how they heard of me," he said, smiling.

Thus began Kei Kokubun's life of service to God and his community, a journey that has taken him through the ministry at the All Peoples Christian Church for 17 years, to the Oriental Service Center for four years, the Asian Community Service Center for 20 years until his retirement in 1992 and the Asian Pacific Health Care Venture for the last five years as its Board President.

After attending Drake University, Chapman College in Los Angeles and the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Kokubun began working at All Peoples Christian Church as its Youth Pastor in July, 1951. In 1956, he married Elaine Taylor, his wife of 44 years and became the Pastor of All Peoples.

"I really loved the people at All Peoples," he said. "At that time, there was a great deal of racial prejudice. The spirit of the people there created a wonderful interracial fellowship. It was a meaningful experience participating in this environment serving the inner city community for 17 years. I particularly embraced the idea that the church and center were one...and that all of life is sacred."

**B**ut after 17 years, Kokubun began to feel he had been at All Peoples long enough. For 17 years, he delivered a freshly written, original sermon every Sunday. And for 17 years, he struggled and worried every week whether or not he could deliver yet another one. Finally, one Sunday, he got lazy, pulled an old one from his files and delivered it.

"After the service, a member came up to me and said, 'Rev. Kei, it was good to hear that sermon again.' That's when I knew it was definitely time to move on!"

Ironically, though, the same denomination that had helped him become a minister back when he was in the internment camp could not find another church for him to serve because of racism.

So Kokubun ended up leaving the ministry, and turned to the community.

"I transitioned into the community thinking this was still my Christian work," he said. "Believing in interracial brotherhood, I felt right at home coming into the Asian

community and working with all ethnic groups. I just felt right at home working with everybody."

In 1968, Kokubun started the Oriental Service Center, and began his new career as its first director. The Center, which provided information and referral, and direct and resource development services, was the first Asian and Pacific Islander multicultural program funded by Federal anti-poverty funds.

In 1972, when Los Angeles County began its own Asian Community Service Center, Kokubun applied and became its first Director. He also worked with many community leaders and organized the Asian Pacific Planning Council (now called the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council or A3PCON) to develop multilingual and multicultural programs in the areas of substance abuse, employment, mental health, disability, youth, senior citizen and ethnic service centers.

Back when there was nothing to meet the needs of LA's API communities, Kei Kokubun was there, building from the ground up. He is truly one of the community's pioneers.

"The great thing was working with the community," he said. "It was very exciting to see the community develop and come up. And to see the young people doing such a wonderful job now, and for me to be alive to see it is really satisfying."

At APHCV, Kokubun has continued to be on the ground floor of the agency's growth and development. Under his leadership and along with Executive Director Kazue Shibata, APHCV established its community health center in 1997, and in 1999, completed the purchase of the building.

"Since retiring, Health Care Venture is the only one of the organizations that I've stuck with. I felt this group was so important because health concerns and services was something we didn't have until later.

"I've been especially moved by the clients APHCV is serving. For many of them, Health Care Venture is the only place where they can receive bilingual/bicultural services. And to work with someone like Kazue who has done so much as an individual...I wanted to support her."

Along with APHCV, Kokubun has been spending his retirement years as an active member of his church choir and remains involved with a retired Nisei ministers fellowship. He and his wife have two grown daughters and a ten-year-old grandson, who lives with his parents in Nashville.

He says he plans to stay with APHCV as long as he's still wanted.

"When I first became Board president, I agreed to do the job for six months. I really believe in this program. That's one of the reasons I've stayed on. The Board has not asked me to go yet, so I'm sticking around."

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### CHECK OUT APHCV ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

APHCV has its own Web Page currently under construction.

To check it out, go to our site address: <http://aphcv.apanet.org>