



THE BONSAI NEWS

Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Inc. • Winter 2001

APHCV Celebrates Its School-Based Clinic with Thank You Reception

APHCV celebrated its school based clinic at Marshall High School by hosting a special reception on Monday, November 26 for clinic funders and Los Angeles City Councilman Eric Garcetti. The event was an opportunity for APHCV to thank the Crail Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Permanente and Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky for their support of the school based clinic. Attending the reception included (Front row, l-r) Clinic staff member Tasha Salcedo, Marshall High students Naira Galoyan, Ashley Dulac and Ronnie Gomez; Lori Vollandt of Marshall High, student Maria Gomez, APHCV Executive Director Kazue Shibata, Board President Kei Kokubun, and APHCV's School Based Clinic Coordinator Jeanne Aguinaldo. (Back row, l-r) Marshall High Principal Thomas Abraham, Tony Armada of Kaiser Permanente, Steve Zimmer of Marshall High, City Councilman Eric Garcetti, Pamela Dean of Kaiser Permanente, George Villanueva of Councilman Garcetti's office and APHCV's Capital Campaign Coordinator Soji Kashiwagi.



APHCV AWARDED STATE COMMUNITY CLINIC GRANT FOR EXPANSION AND RENOVATIONS

Renovations to expand APHCV services are underway!

Funded by a \$126,314.00 grant from the Cedillo-Alarcon Community Clinic Investment Act of 2000 through the California Health Facilities Financing Authority (CHFFA), the renovations began in mid-October and will be ongoing through February of next year.

"We are grateful to the State's Health Facilities Financing Authority for this support," said Kazue Shibata, APHCV Executive Director. "This grant allows us to add new space and purchase the equipment needed for the expansion of our services."

The renovated space will accommodate the expanded perinatal program, integration of behavioral health, and the expansion of pediatric and family practice.

New services include the addition of perinatal and mental health services.

Phase One of the project included the creation of a medication dispensary on the 1st floor, and

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Board Profile

Cheryl Fujino Keeps the Faith With Hope and Humor

By Soji Kashiwagi

Ever since she was young, Cheryl Fujino had always wanted to be a police officer. At 14, she was a sergeant in the Police Explorers, providing security for fundraising events and Hollywood Bowl concerts. Something about law enforcement intrigued her, and she liked the idea of "protecting and serving."

However, at 5'2", she was too short for the LAPD. But instead of giving up, she found another way to protect and serve—as an undercover security guard for Bullocks and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Cheryl, an APHCV Board member and patient, would patrol the store looking for suspicious-looking people and was often surprised to find wealthy women stuffing thousands of dollars worth of store merchandise into their Louis Vuitton and Gucci satchel bags.

At 18, Cheryl looked more like your typical teenage shopper than a member of store security. But she was watching. And when she spotted a crime in progress, she would call for help and wait. As soon as the shoplifter would leave the store and walk outside, Cheryl and partner would strike.

"We'd come up from behind and say, 'Excuse me, I think you forgot to pay for something.'"

Busted.

But her career in undercover store security was short-lived. After three jewelry robberies within a week, Cheryl's mother had had enough.

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AGENCY NEWS

APHCV GIVES THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

WEINGART FOUNDATION

In support of APHCV's current expansion and renovation project, the Weingart Foundation recently awarded the agency \$16,336.00 to cover additional expenses not covered by the State's Community Clinic grant.

Specifically, the grant will cover part of the cost of adding an isolation room to protect patients from being infected by airborne diseases such as tuberculosis; to repair the existing cooling and airflow system in APHCV's new dispensary; and to cover a portion of the cost of a colposcopy machine.

"We want to thank the Weingart Foundation for its support," said Kei Kokubun, Board President.

GRACE NIXON FOUNDATION

APHCV gratefully acknowledges and thanks Mrs. Grace Nixon for her recent \$10,000 donation to the agency. Ever since APHCV launched its Capital Campaign to purchase its building in 1998-99, Mrs. Nixon has been a generous supporter and continues the support the agency as it expands its services. "I can't thank Grace enough," said Kei Kokubun, a long-time friend of Mrs. Nixon's. "I really appreciate all she has done for us."

SADAKO & HIROSHI KASHIWAGI

APHCV would also like to extend its thanks and appreciation to Sadako and Hiroshi Kashiwagi of San Francisco for their recent donation of \$2,200 to the agency.

Mrs. Kashiwagi, another long-time supporter of APHCV, said that when her immigrant parents came here from Japan in the early 1900's there was no place like APHCV for them to go to for their health care. "You are doing important work," she said.

"We thank Mr. and Mrs. Kashiwagi for their continued support," said Kazue Shibata. "As an immigrant myself, I know exactly what she is talking about, and I appreciate their support of the work we're doing."

KAZUE SHIBATA ELECTED PRESIDENT OF CLINIC ASSOCIATION

APHCV's Executive Director Kazue Shibata was elected President of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC) and has been serving in that capacity since July. CCALAC is a membership organization for community clinics, advocating for the health care of low income communities in Los Angeles County. Prior to becoming President, Kazue served as CCALAC's Vice President.

FIRST FLOOR DISPENSARY PROVIDES MEDICATIONS FOR PATIENTS

APHCV now has a fully-staffed dispensary located on the first floor, and has been dispensing much-needed medications to its patients since October 1.



APHCV Opens Downstairs Dispensary: Licensed Vocational Nurse Nancy Sunnananda is one of several staff who operate APHCV's newly opened Dispensary on the first floor.

S. Mark Taper Foundation Funds APHCV's "Health Ride" Project

APHCV recently was awarded a \$45,000 grant from the S. Mark Taper Foundation in support of its "Health Ride" transportation project for elderly, low income immigrants and youth who normally would not have access to health care and after-school services.

Funds from the S. Mark Taper Foundation will go toward the purchase of a 12-passenger van as well as first-year insurance, gas and maintenance costs.



S. Mark Taper Foundation Funds APHCV's "Health Ride" Project: APHCV's Executive Director Kazue Shibata (l) recently received a visit from the S. Mark Taper Foundation's Program Officer Adrienne Wittenberg and Executive Director Raymond Reisler. The Foundation's support will allow APHCV to purchase a 12-passenger van for clients in need of transportation services.

The main purpose of the "Health Ride" project is to provide much needed transportation services for APHCV clients are in desperate need of transportation so they can access services.

The S. Mark Taper Foundation is a Los Angeles-based private family foundation with an interest in funding a variety of issues including aging, arts (theatre), children (abuse prevention, health, teenage pregnancy prevention, child care), the economically disadvantaged, and health/human services (immigrants, AIDS).

"We would like to thank the S. Mark Taper Foundation for its generous support of our project," said Kazue Shibata, APHCV's Executive Director. "This grant gives people much needed access and opens the door to better health."

Prior to the dispensary, APHCV providers would have to retrieve medications from a small medication storage room and then dispense them to patients.

Under the new system, providers write down their medication orders, which then get scanned by computer and recorded downstairs, where they are filled and dispensed.

A dispensary differs from a pharmacy in that it can be run by a registered nurse, with a pharmacist available on a consultant basis. The other major difference is that the dispensary can only serve APHCV patients, and not anyone from outside the clinic.

APHCV's dispensary includes a wide variety of medications for the most commonly seen diseases among APHCV patients such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and coughs/colds.

"Some of our patients have really chronic diseases. Without the proper medications, their health will deteriorate," said Dominic Koh, APHCV's Nurse Practitioner who played a major role in the start-up of the dispensary. "Through our dispensary, we're able to help our patients keep their diseases under control."

Healthier Living: What's the Skinny on Fat?

By Dr. John Hoh, Medical Director and Cindy Chu, MSN, CFNP

Most people are aware that “eating right”, exercising more, and taking necessary medications are “good for you.” Just how important is this anyway? Recent studies now show that White women are making use of these methods while women of color are much less likely to do so. In the past 25 years, the average life expectancy of the White women has gradually increased much beyond their sisters to more than five additional years of life!

It is not just length of life but later development of serious illness that is significant. After all, who wants to have a stroke or heart attack? What have you done for yourself lately to make sure your risks are lower? This month we will look at lowering your cholesterol.

Some people have high levels of cholesterol in their blood. This can coat and clog blood vessels and decrease blood flow to many important areas of your body. If severe and untreated, it can lead to early heart attacks, strokes, and other problems including impotence in men. If Hyperlipidemia is severe, taking medications can prolong your life.

Your own liver contributes approximately 90% of your cholesterol level by making the most of the cholesterol from the food that you eat. If you are blessed with parents whose genes for manufacturing cholesterol results in low levels then be very happy. The rest of us have to eat right, exercise more, and if needed, take medications.

Now the bad news: High cholesterol generally does not give you physical signs and symptoms until there is substantial damage. Studies reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration show that the amount of desirable cholesterol should be 20% lower than what we used to think. Revised recommendations were published just recently. They are as follows:

TYPE	FUNCTION	GOAL
Total Cholesterol	Needed for cell membranes but excess coats your blood vessels leading to heart attacks and strokes	< 200 mg/dl
High Density Lipoprotein (HDL)	Helps transport Cholesterol back to liver (“AKA Good Cholesterol”)	> 40 (the higher the better)
Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL)	High levels leads to earlier heart disease (“AKA Bad Cholesterol”)	< 100

Just when you thought you were making progress with your diet, they “moved your cheese” (literally)!

What you can do to make it better: Eat less fatty and

fried food. People living in Asia generally eat more boiled and steamed foods. They eat more fish and vegetables; less pork, beef, and lamb. Many studies show that they have less heart disease than similar people from Asia who have moved to America. Not only can you lower your risk for heart attacks and strokes, but you also may have less risk for cancer of the colon! (Isn't this is worth a little change in diet?)

Other healthy living ideas that are good for over all better health include the following: Exercise at least 30 minutes, at least five days a week. While small amounts of alcohol (less than two glasses of wine per day) and exercise will both help increase your good cholesterol, exercise is better because it also helps to build new blood vessels. Eat more fruits (unless you have diabetes), vegetables, and fish. Such a diet and exercise are generally considered good for your entire family. Those who already have heart problems need to consult further before doing stressful exercise.

Medications: Most medications for Hyperlipidemia can affect the liver. Usually they are mild and well tolerated. You should think about whether the risks of side effects are worth it when the risk of heart problems is definitely high. If you suspect you are having side effects, please stop the medication and contact us for evaluation. The following are a few medications used:

- **Niacin:** Actually one of the B vitamins. One of the best medications for lowering both cholesterol and triglycerides (oils). May cause uncomfortable flushing and warmth for about half an hour after taking. Usually requires quite high dose to work (increased gradually). Best to take after a full meal.
- **Statins (e.g. Mevacor, and Zocor, and others):** These are very potent medications for lowering cholesterol.

Please remember: This illness is quite common and tends to occur in families. Everyone in your family can benefit from a healthy diet. You may want to have other members of your family checked as well. When parents have high cholesterol, their children (as young as 2 years old) should be tested. A healthy diet early can add years to their life.

The above is very basic information which we hope will help you feel better. If you have questions please call us at (323) 644-3888 for an appointment.

NOTE: We are pleased to announce the addition of Cindy Chu, MSN, CFNP to APHCV's Clinical Staff. She graduated from UCSF and did lipid metabolism research at a Cornell University Medical Center and Rockefeller University. She also has a particular interest in Women's Health. If you are interested in having her help you with a cholesterol problem, please call for an appointment at 323/644-3888.

APHCV AWARDED RENOVATION GRANT

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creating an improved isolation room for TB patients.

Phase Two includes renovating the medical charts room, and installing new

space efficient medical record filing shelves for the medical charts room.

Phase Three includes the creation of additional offices and creating a new

patient check-in counter in the front lobby to accommodate the projected increase in patient flow.

The grant will also cover the cost of purchasing medical equipment, computers, printers and office furniture to accommodate the addition of new program staff.

CHERYL FUJINO Continued from Page 1

"She told me, 'That's it. You're not going back.'"

After that, the Los Angeles native went on to work as a medical assistant for an orthopedic surgeon and then worked several years for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

But starting in the 1970s, a string of accidents and bad luck changed her life.

In 1974, while walking to school, she was struck in the hip by a car and knocked to the ground.

In 1976, she was rear-ended by a car going 40 miles per hour.

In 1979, she was broadsided in the parking lot at Valley College.

In 1980, rear-ended while waiting at a crosswalk.

"I've never hit anyone," she said. "I've always been the one to get hit."

Then she had a 19-year stretch from 1980 to 1999 without a car accident.

But in 1984, she reinjured her back and neck while attempting to lift a five-gallon container of bottled water.

Then in 1986, she slipped on some water in a ladies restroom. When she grabbed the wash basin to break her fall, her body jerked causing lower back pain which went down to her legs.

In 1997, while attempting to leave her dentist's office, she slipped on a slick floor and fell flat on her back. Lucky for her, her mother, the angel, caught and cradled her head just before it slammed onto the floor.

And in 1999, she was broad-sided on the passenger side of her T-Bird. The car was totaled. She drives her parents' car to get around nowadays.

The result of all this? In a word, pain. 24/7. Not made up. Not psychosomatic, as some have suggested.

"It hurts to stand. It hurts to sit. It hurts to walk too long," she said. "I've been suffering with pain more than half my life, which hasn't been a whole lot of fun."

Her spine hurts. Her neck hurts. Her hands go numb. She has tendinitis in her elbow. Pain in her toe joints and knee joints. On top of all this she suffers from Fibromyalgia, heart problems, headaches since childhood, has trouble sleeping at night and has an ongoing battle with depression.

"They say people with chronic pain suffer from depression," she said. "I guess that's true."

Since 1989, she's been on disability and unable to work. Without insurance, she would purchase her medications at full-price at Costco. Pretty soon, her Costco card was up to \$3,500 on medications alone. She also racked up \$3,500 on another card. The situation was bleak.

Then one day she was reading the Health section of the Los Angeles Times and there, under "low cost or no cost"

health care, was APHCV, located in the same neighborhood she grew up in, and less than three miles away from her current home in Silver Lake. She called and made an appointment.

"I am just so grateful for this clinic," she said. "It has helped me tremendously. Dr. Hoh's extremely broad spectrum of knowledge far surpasses any doctor I have ever seen. He is always so patient with me and always very professional."

At APHCV, Cheryl has been able to get her care as well as her medications at a significantly reduced rate. She estimates that without APHCV she would be paying up to \$500 a month for her medications.

"Words cannot express my sincerest Thank you to Kazue Shibata for being so kind and understanding for allowing me to be a Board Member at APHCV," said Cheryl. "I would also like to send a great big Thank you to Board President Kei Kokubun and my fellow Board Members for being so patient and understanding when I'm not able to attend Board meetings. I am so grateful for having the opportunity to serve APHCV as a board member. I would also like to thank the entire APHCV staff for always being so nice and accommodating to me and my needs at APHCV."

"I don't know what I would have done had it not been for Health Care Venture," she said.

But despite all her suffering, Cheryl remains upbeat. She cooks and bakes for relaxation. For ten years, she volunteered at the Little Tokyo Health Fair where she assisted seniors with health screenings. She laughs a lot, and manages to keep things in perspective.

"It's very important to keep a sense of humor. Humor has helped a lot. They say laughter is the best medicine. I always think that someone has it worse than me."

Knock Cheryl Fujino down. She gets up again. And again. In fact, she's still standing. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, she counts her blessings.

"I have great parents. My mom is my best friend. We're really close. We speak at the same time and say the same thing. We wear the same colors without planning it. She's my American Express Card. I never leave home without her."

She also believes someone else is watching over her.

"I have a personal relationship with God," she said. "I guess with each obstacle you're supposed to get stronger. That's how I look at it. God is putting me through the test."

"I thank him when I wake up in the morning and before I go to sleep at night. I know angels are watching over me because I know I am truly blessed."



APHCV Boardmember
Cheryl Fujino

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APHCV ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB: <http://aphcv.apanet.org>

APHCV's brand-new website is currently under construction. Our new web address will be published in our next newsletter.

APHCV's REAL YOUTH CENTER WEBSITE: www.realyc.com