Asian Family Center Oral History Collection, 2014-2015

Overview of the Collection

**Creator**  
Fernández, Natalia, 1985-

**Title**  
Asian Family Center Oral History Collection

**Dates**  
2014-2015 (inclusive)
2014 2015

**Quantity**  
11 sets of video and audio files, (42.2 gigabytes born digital)

**Collection Number**  
OH 30

**Summary**  
The Asian Family Center Oral History Collection consists of interviews conducted with board and staff members of the Asian Family Center (AFC), one of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's five primary locations in Portland, Oregon. The Asian Family Center exists to serve the needs of the Portland area's growing Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Documented within the collection are descriptions of the interviewees' job duties and responsibilities; their thoughts on the value and future of the center; AFC history, programs, and services; and the interviewees' personal stories regarding their immigration to the United States.

**Repository**  
Oregon State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives Research Center
Special Collections and Archives Research Center
121 The Valley Library
Oregon State University
Corvallis OR
97331-4501
Telephone: 541-737-2075
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**Access Restrictions**  
Collection is open for research.

**Languages**  
English

**Historical Note**
The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) was established in 1976 to serve immigrants and refugees in Portland, Oregon. IRCO's mission is to promote the integration of refugees, immigrants, and the community at large into a self-sufficient, healthy, and inclusive multiethnic society. Through its five primary locations – IRCO Main, Africa House/Skill Center, Asian Family Center, Senior Services Center, and the International Language Bank – the organization provides programs and services related to training and employment, health and aging, English language learning, naturalization and social adjustment, community development, early childhood, parenting and youth development, education and interpretation and translation.
Sivai Bennett was born in 1960 in American Samoa. She lived there until she moved to La Grande, Oregon, at age 18 to attend Eastern Oregon University and study political science. After two years, Bennett transferred to the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, where she continued her studies to become a lawyer even though she aspired to become a teacher. There she met her husband. She moved with him to La Grande and began her studies to become an elementary school teacher. In 1984, Bennett, her husband, and her daughter moved back to American Samoa where she taught high school. They then relocated to El Centro, California, in 1988 where they lived for 10 years. Eventually they moved to Portland, Oregon, where Bennett received her Masters of Arts in Teaching in 2003 at the University of Portland. Currently, she is a teacher at Harold Oliver Elementary in Portland. She also serves as a volunteer advisory board member of IRCO’s Asian Family Center where her role is to advise the directors, help fundraise, and connect IRCO to her community. Bennett also serves as the secretary for the board of directors at the Samoa Pacific Development Corporation where she has previously held the positions of president, vice-president, and treasurer.

Ronault “Polo” Catalani was born on December 15th, 1953 in the Netherlands. He identifies with both Catalan and Manado ethnicities and heritage. Catalani spent his early childhood living in Indonesia until he and his family moved to the Netherlands due to the civil strife. Catalani lived in the Netherlands for six years where he began school. In 1966, his family moved to Salem, Oregon, as church-sponsored refugees. In 1972, Catalani was drafted by the United States army, so he sought asylum with his grandfather in the Netherlands in order to not be sent back to the turmoil in Asia from which he escaped. Once the draft had ended, Catalani returned to Salem, Oregon. He then began attending the University of Oregon on an athletic scholarship and received his bachelor’s degree in political science, psychology, and philosophy. During this time he met his wife, and he also travelled to the Netherlands, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, and Ethiopia on fellowships and grants for one of his professors—Professor Davies. Under Professor Davies, Catalani continued on to graduate school in human migrations. However, because he and his wife had a baby, he decided to not finish school at this time and began work for the Oregon Department of Human Resources in Coos Bay. Returning to Salem, he received his doctorate in law followed by his post-doc in community lawyering at Howard University in D.C. Using this education, Catalani started organizing minority communities in Salem, and then moved this practice to Portland. He partnered with mutual assistance associations and the government in order to establish IRCO in 1986. Currently he serves as a board member for both the Asian Family Center (AFC) and IRCO. His current duties include civic engagement, fundraising, finding future partners, and facilitating relationships between the government and IRCO.

Lee Po Cha was born in Xayaburi, Laos, on July 11th, 1963 to Laotian parents. He self-identifies as Laotian American, Hmong American—ethnically as Hmong and nationality-wise as Laotian. He grew up there until the mid-seventies when he and his family, consisting of his parents and 4 siblings, moved to Thailand before moving to Portland, Oregon, in 1978 after being sponsored by the Metropolitan Baptist Church. Cha attended Portland State University to study business administration. He began working for IRCO in 1981 and helped to establish the Asian Family Center in 1994. He currently holds the position of associate director at IRCO where he works to assist the executive director on government relations and to oversee that all of the programs are running smoothly.

Hongsa Chanthavong was born on October 1, 1934, in Laos to Laotian parents who were born in the early 1900s. Because he comes from Laos, he self-identifies as Lao. Chanthavong attended school in Laos, in Vientiane, until coming to the United States in 1959 to study at the University of Miami. He came by himself to study in the School of Government of Political Science on a scholarship granted by the U.S. government. After his graduation in 1964, he began working for the State Department as an escort interpreter, but after three months, he returned to Laos. There, he worked for the government when in 1975 he was captured by communists and came as a refugee to the United States in 1983 with his wife and children. He began his career at IRCO in 1984 as a business specialist with the Economic Development Project. He moved from that position to resource specialist to director of the International
Language Bank, and then he set up the Asian Family Center, becoming the center coordinator in 1994. He now works as the community organizer of the Diversity and Civic Leadership Project and as a business development specialist.

**Sophorn Cheang** was born in the capital city of Cambodia on October 16, 1980, to Cambodian parents; therefore, she self-identifies as Cambodian-American. Cheang was raised in Cambodia until she was 19 when she moved to Oregon to attend, first, Mount Hood Community College and then Portland State University to earn an associate's degree in banking and another degree in finance. Because her aunt and uncle were already living in Gresham, Oregon, they sponsored her to attend school; her parents have since moved to the United States. First getting involved with the Asian Family Center in 2010, Cheang joined the advisory board in early 2011; she then became the chair of the advisory board until she quit that position to pursue the operating side of the non-profit organization. She currently works as the community health and leadership development manager where she both oversees the programs that work closely with the organization's health programs and manages the budget.

**Danita Huynh** was born on September 6th in Newport, Oregon, to a father who was born in Canada and a mother who was born in Arkansas. Huynh identifies herself as Caucasian with a background of Norwegian. Living in Lincoln City, Southern Oregon, and various other places throughout Oregon, she moved to Georgia for about five years. However, she then returned to Oregon and has been living in Portland for 21 years. Huynh has been affiliated with the Asian Family Center for 17 years; starting out as a parent educator doing direct-service work with the Parent-Child Development Program in 1997, she was then promoted to the lead parent educator position, then to coordinator, then to her current position as manager of AFC's Children Programing. On a daily basis, her job consists of supporting and supervising 25 home-visitors, collaborating with other programs, presenting to other community agencies, and monitoring budgets, goals, and outcomes. Huynh has a background in early education and Asian communities.

**Thuy Le** was born in Vietnam in 1981. Her parents were also born in Vietnam in the 1950s. She lived in Vietnam with her family until she was 16 years old. In 1997 they moved to Oregon after being sponsored by Le's uncle. She attended Portland Community College and transferred to Portland State University; she graduated in 2006 with a degree in sociology. While attending college, Le began to volunteer at the Asian Family Center in 2004 with the Parent and Child Development Services Program. After graduating she was hired full time with the program. Within the same Parenting Department she worked with the Healthy Start Program until 2010. In 2011 she began a half time position as a Vietnamese Family Engagement Specialist within the Youth Department. Soon after, she began another half time position as a Rental Assistance Case Manager within the Anti-Poverty Department. After a few years working both jobs, she became full time with the Anti-Poverty Department, half time as case manager and half time as program coordinator. Le has family in Vietnam, has visited several times, and hopes to continue to explore the country.

**Simeon D. Mamaril** was born February 12, 1925, in the Philippines. His parents moved to Oregon when Mamaril was a toddler, and he was raised by his paternal grandparents who were farmers. After World War II, he attended college at the Far Eastern University in Manila and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. Prior to graduation he gained employment with the Philippine National Bank in Manila. In 1963-64, on study leave grant by the Philippine National Bank, he took economic courses through the University of Oregon in Eugene and at the Portland State College in Portland. In 1984 Mamaril, a Branch Manager, retired, and that same year he immigrated to the United States on a permanent status. Since his arrival in Portland, aside from his regular employment in various firms, Mamaril has been involved in various local and national, social and civic, both private and public organizations in various capacities. Organizations include: the Asian Family Center (AFC) - one of the founders, a board member, and an officer; Asian American Seniors Coalition, Asian

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**Family Center; Oregon Commission on Asian Affairs – commissioner; Asian Law Enforcement Council - Portland Police Dept.; the Asian Pacific Net Work of Oregon (APANO) – one of the founders; the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) - past President for seven years; Filipino American Association of Portland and Vicinity Inc. - member and past Board Chair under various administrations; Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) - past Board Chair and current Auditor and in the Trade and Investment Committee; Aguman Capampanga NW USA, Inc. - honorary member; Greater Salem Filipino Association; Council of Filipino American Associations (CFAA) - a permanent Trustee. On the national level Mamaril has served with the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NAFFAA) - Chair, State of Oregon; Federation of Philippine American Chambers of Commerce (FPACC) - Secretary. Mamaril married his first wife in 1952 and they had six children. She passed away in 1986 and he remarried in 1987. They have lived in Portland, Oregon permanently since then. He regularly returns to the Philippines for various reasons including: medical/dental missions once or twice year, trade and investment missions, family gatherings, as well as attending various organizational events.**

**Linda Nguyen** was born in 1966 in Vietnam. Her parents were also born in Vietnam. She and her family immigrated to the United States during the 1970s, but first lived in Guam for a few years in a refugee camp prior to being sponsored by a church to move to Oregon. Nguyen’s family, which included ten children, was the first Vietnamese refugee family to immigrate to Oregon. As a teenager Nguyen volunteered as an interpreter in the health and court system and worked picking strawberries as well as assisting her mother with her janitorial work. After living in California during the 1980s, Nguyen returned to Oregon. Prior to joining the Asian Family Center she owned her own business and became a nail tech. In 2006, Nguyen began working for the Asian Family Center as an Energy Assistant with the Anti-Poverty Program and has been in the position since that time. Nguyen has two children with her first husband and is currently married to her second husband.

**Connie Kim Yen Nguyen-Truong** was born May 26th, 1976, in Portland, Oregon. As her parents were both born in Vietnam, she self-identifies as Vietnamese-American. She grew up in the Portland area and attended Benson High School. Upon graduation, she attended Linfield College Good Samaritan School of Nursing where she graduated in 2000 with her Bachelors of Science in Nursing. After practicing for five years, Nguyen-Truong attended the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) School of Nursing where she received her PhD and completed a post-doctoral fellowship. Her dissertation discussed health practices, in particular cervical cancer screenings, among Vietnamese immigrant women in the United States. This involved work with IRCO AFC’s Vietnamese Women's Health Project. After defending her dissertation in 2011, she pursued her postdoctoral fellowship through 2013. Not only did she worked with IRCO in the Vietnamese Women’s Health Project (parts one, two, and three) and its community advisory board, but she also became a board member for AFC during her post-doc and a fellow of the Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute's cohort one. Nguyen-Truong continued her work in part three of the Vietnamese Women's Health Project with AFC, was a member of APICLI’s Steering Committee, and was appointed co-chair of IRCO AFC’s advisory board in 2015. Her duties included discussing funding, programs, and the future of AFC. Nguyen-Truong was also a professional nurse and nurse educator at OHSU in Portland. In the summer of 2015, she accepted a position at the Washington State University College of Nursing.

**Lyn Tan** was born on October 1st, 1964 in Singapore, to Singaporean parents. She identifies herself as Singaporean nationality-wise, Peranakan in terms of ethnic culture, and, because of these identities, she is comfortable with Chinese-based cultures as well. Tan grew up in Singapore and left to attend the University of Oregon in 1983 at age 19 to study film theory and aesthetics and journalism in public relations and advertising. After college, she returned to Singapore and worked for an international airline until permanently moving to Oregon in 1991. Upon this return to Portland, she studied at Portland State University and eventually started as a SUN site manager for a middle school. After a lot of moving around within her job description and duties, Tan currently works as the program manager for Student
and Support Services for Education Success where she works with coordinating the programs they oversee and writing grants.

Content Description

The collection consists of eleven born digital recordings (2 audio and 9 video) of interviews with staff and board members of IRCO’s Asian Family Center. Video recordings were originally captured in *.mts format, the audio recording was a *.wav file, and all files which have been saved as preservation copies for each interview. Access *.mpg and *.mp3 files have been created for each interview as well. All interviews held in the collection have been transcribed by the staff of the Special Collections and Archives Research Center. Researcher access to both the collection's interviews and transcripts is available on site and online. Links to online videos and transcripts are provided within the item-level description of this collection.

All interviews were conducted in Portland, Oregon by Natalia Fernández, the Oregon Multicultural Librarian and a staff member of the Special Collections and Archives Research Center. Interviewees include staff and board members of IRCO’s Asian Family Center (AFC). The AFC was established in 1994 and provides multilingual/multicultural, community-based services such as early childhood development services, parent education and support, youth services, anti-poverty assistance and health education programs. Topics discussed include: personal immigration journeys, the history of the AFC, staff and board member responsibilities, the challenges and rewards of community based projects, and ideas for the future of the AFC. Specific projects discussed include: the SUN schools program, the Vietnamese Women's Health Project, the Coalition of Communities of Color project and report, and the Golden Leaf Education Foundation.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

Asian Family Center Oral History Collection (OH 30), Oregon State University Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Corvallis, Oregon.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Interviews are arranged chronologically by date of interview.

Preservation Note

All interviews described in this collection are available online. Born digital .mpg or .mp3 files created in the building of this collection are also available on site.

Custodial History

Acquisition Information
All interviews were conducted by Natalia Fernández, the Oregon Multicultural Librarian and a staff member of the Special Collections & Archives Research Center.

**Future Additions**

Future additions to this collection are anticipated.

**Related Materials**

This collection is a component of the [Oregon Multicultural Archives](http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv93234).


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**Detailed Description of the Collection**

**Series 1: Interviews, 2014**

5 interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1: Hongsa Chanthavong</td>
<td>To begin this interview, Chanthavong discusses his education ranging from Laos to the United States, where he attended college. How he came to live in the United States, first as a refugee, is then discussed in conjunction with the positions he has held at IRCO and the subsequent founding of the Asian Family Center and the development of its programs. The role of the AFC and the needs assessment alongside funding is then discussed. Because coordination is huge part of AFC, Chanthavong explains his role within that sphere. There are challenges associated with working with such a diverse community; Chanthavong lays out what some of these challenges are and then talks a little bit about the Coalition of Communities of Color project that he helped to start. In closing, this interview highlights general projects from the AFC and Chanthavong’s recommendations for the Center. Interview <a href="http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv93234">video</a> and transcript available online.</td>
<td>July 1, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2: Sophorn Cheang</td>
<td>To begin this interview, Cheang first discusses her family in Cambodia, going to college in Oregon, and the motivations for such a decision. She first became involved with IRCO through a class that the Asian Family Center (AFC) had held. She then discusses her involvement with Engage which is a diversity and civic leadership program and her previous time as a board member. The interview continues on this line of thought and touches upon what Cheang’s</td>
<td>September 11, 2014</td>
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current position entails, what services AFC provides its community, and what funding that requires. Programming related to the local community and the leadership roles therein is explained, setting the stage for information regarding outreach within the community and the recommendations she has for the future of the organization. Shifting away from the Asian Family Center, Cheang speaks about her work with the Golden Leaf Education Foundation, its establishment, the fundraising involved, how that money is being used in Cambodia to build schools, and her visits to said schools. To close, Cheang relays advice that was once given to her in order to be successful.

Interview video and transcript available online.

1.3: Danita Huynh

Beginning this interview, Huynh discusses her personal life, including: her parents, where she has lived, and how she began at the Asian Family Center. She follows this by discussing the daily duties associated with her position at AFC. She also explains other programs that AFC offers, how people find out about said services, and the constant needs that are present in the Asian Pacific Islander community. The interview then changes to explain formal partnerships and funding. Shifting topics again, Huynh highlights the community itself when discussing home visits, language issues, and population shifts. She talks about how she became involved with the AFC and her background of early education. Her model of a strength-based approach when dealing with AFC's mission is discussed next, along with how needs are assessed in the community, what the Center lacks, and what skillset is needed for this line of work. On a more personal level, Huynh describes some personal achievements and mentors she has had. In concluding, she notes upon some logistics of the AFC, such as training and staff.

Interview audio and transcript available online.

1.4: Lee Po Cha

This interview begins with Lee Po Cha discussing personal information such as where he has lived, his time at Portland State University, how his family coped with being refugees in America, the duties of his father when he worked for the U.S. government during the Vietnam War, and his siblings. Transitioning, he recounts his beginnings at both IRCO and the Asian Family Center (AFC). He discusses the role that he had to play when he was the director of the AFC. He then expounds upon the needs of the community, outreach, his current role as the associate director of IRCO, and funding. More specifically, he discusses the research and outcomes of the Coalition of Communities of Color report. Also important in this interview, he highlights the similarities and differences of struggles within the community of color to whom they tailor their programs. Lee Po Cha concludes by expressing what he foresees as the future of AFC, how the immigrant and refugee population has shifted, and acknowledgments of those who influenced him.

Interview video and transcript available online.

1.5: Lyn Tan

October 7, 2014

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This interview begins with the personal information of Lyn Tan which includes her time spent at the University of Oregon, her long-distance relationship with her boyfriend, her time working at an international airline, and her motivations for returning to Portland, Oregon. She then discusses her time spent at graduate school at Portland State University while volunteering at IRCO and her initial gateway into working for this organization. As her first official position at IRCO; Tan describes the SUN school programs and what her job specifically entailed. She addresses the ways in which this program tailors to the needs of the community before explaining the transition she made between that job as a site manager to her current position as program manager and the break in-between when she worked for the public school district and as the coordinator for the SSSES program at IRCO. Moving along, she discusses her personal vision of what direction the SUN schools are moving toward, mixed with the vision of IRCO and Multnomah County. To close, Tan discusses some achievements that she deems important, while highlighting the significance of all of their accomplishments.

**Series 2: Interviews, 2015**

6 interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1: Sivai Bennett</td>
<td>January 14, 2015</td>
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<td>1:33:42</td>
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<td>Beginning this interview, Bennett discusses personal information as well as her decision to move from American Samoa to Oregon and her early studies at Eastern Oregon University and the University of Oregon. Bennett discusses her life after college when her newly formed family moved back to American Samoa and then El Centro, California, when her teaching career began. From there, she highlights several of her mentors, her naturalization process, and the language barrier when she immigrated to the United States. The interview is then transferred to the present when she discusses the high percentage of students of color at her current school, Harold Oliver Elementary, her work as an advisory board member of IRCO’s Asian Family Center, the needs of the Pacific Islander community, the Sun programs, and her work with the Samoa Pacific Development Corporation. The theme of the language barrier that many immigrants and refugees face consistently resurfaces. To close, Bennett emphasizes the importance of making connections amongst groups of immigrants and utilizing the resources that so many of the organizations she discusses provide.</td>
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Interview [video](#) and [transcript](#) available online.

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<tr>
<th>2.2: Ronault “Polo” Catalani</th>
<th>January 30, 2015</th>
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<td>1:25:49</td>
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<tr>
<td>This interview begins by chronicling Ronault Catalani’s family background and structure and his early migrations and immigrations. Following this, he explains his time at the University of Oregon and his mentors there. After meeting</td>
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</table>
2.3: Connie KY Nguyen-Truong
1:36:34
This interview begins by outlining Connie Nguyen-Truong's education from high school to her post-doc. She discusses her interest in health occupations and extensively explains her work with the Vietnamese Women's Health Project at IRCO's AFC. With this, she chronicles her introduction to this organization, the Vietnamese community, her experiences and philosophy regarding community-based participatory research, and the reactions to her research findings. Nguyen-Truong explains the application process to become an advisory board member for AFC, her duties on that board, and the importance of collaboration between board members who have many different skills. This leads into a discussion of what she is able to bring to the board through her health and research background. The interview then chronicles APICLI's cohorts and the projects that Nguyen-Truong worked on in cohort one. She then highlights the future of IRCO and AFC, the different programs that use research methods within IRCO, and her involvement with the passing of House Bill 2134 in Oregon. In closing, Nguyen-Truong talks about her role as a nursing educator and her recommendations for furthering IRCO's AFC. Her last thoughts emphasize the importance of collaboration with community members to whom AFC programs directly affect.Interview video and transcript available online.

2.4: Simeon Mamaril
1:27:05
Mamaril begins the interview by discussing his childhood, his college application experience, and his job with the Philippine National Bank. He then describes his visit to the United States in 1952 specifically to Tillamook and Portland, Oregon. He also describes his continued educational and professional experiences including his 1963-64 year in Oregon to attend bank trainings and take economic classes at various state universities as well as his studies at the University of the Philippines. He then discusses his six

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children’s lives, specially their professions and where they live. Post retirement, Mamaril explains that he moved to the United States in 1984. Since moving to Oregon, Mamaril has been involved in a variety of community and government organizations and he explains his work with each of them. In terms of his AFC service, Mamaril describes the role of the board as a liaison to the community, its important relationship with the local government, and the board as a policy maker and fundraiser. Mamaril describes the needs of Asian Pacific Islander communities and how the AFC has served them over the years via English classes, gang prevention and senior health services, community leadership opportunities and educational endeavors with local schools. He recommends that the AFC consider organizing more celebrations for its constituents for them gather and learn more about AFC services. To conclude, Mamaril explains his trips to the Philippines including his medical missions to support the local communities. In closing Mamaril states that he plans to continue being involved in community organizations for the rest of his life. Interview video available online; transcript forthcoming.

2.5: Thuy Le
1:04:30
Le begins the interview by briefly describing her life in Vietnam with her parents and younger brother. She describes the process of the family being sponsored by her uncle to immigrate to the United States. Le discusses the challenges of being a teenager in Portland and how she and her family connected with the local Vietnamese community. She then talks about her decision to pursue a degree in sociology and her desire to support her community. Le describes the various positions she has held with the Asian Family Center since 2004 when she began volunteering with Parenting Department. Her work involved home visits and coordinating group activities for families who had children under the age of 5 years. The goals were to help them understand child development, prevent child abuse, and connect families with other beneficial services. Le describes the cultural differences, challenges, and successes of working with the families. As a Vietnamese Family Engagement Specialist, Le explains that she was stationed with elementary schools, which were SUN schools, to work as a parent/school liaison. As a Rental Assistant Case Manager, Le explains that she assists families in Multnomah County with short term rent as well as connecting them to other services such as employment opportunity connections. Le then talks about her personal life: the support system she had when her family moved to Oregon, the process of learning English, differences between her and her parents’ generations, and her love of living in Portland. Le then describes the AFC as the place that “brings families together” and talks about needs of the community and how the AFC can continue to serve families. She also discusses the challenges she has experienced and how she has overcome them, as well as her successes, with the Rental Assistance Program. Le concludes the interview by describing her love of working with children and teaching them about the Vietnamese culture. Interview video available online; transcript forthcoming.

2.6: Linda Nguyen
July 31, 2015
Nguyen begins the interview by describing her childhood, specifically the ordeals she and her family endured as part of the immigration process coming to the United States. She then describes her childhood experiences in Oregon including the racism she suffered, life in Halsey Square with other Vietnamese families, picking strawberries in the summers, the story behind her name change, and the closeness among the Vietnamese community. Nguyen explains that as a teenager she began interpreting of behalf of community members with doctors, lawyers, and at the courthouse. She goes on to discuss her thoughts on serving her fellow community members and the importance of remembering where you come from, however she also shares her reasons for not returning to Vietnam. Nguyen explains that as a teenager, in addition to picking strawberries, she assisted her mother with her janitorial work. After graduating from high school Nguyen attended community college and worked for a lawyer. She mentions the 1980s gang problems that existed in the city and that for her personal safety, she moved to California and did not return to Oregon until 1989; she then carried on her work as a court interpreter. Nguyen expresses her philosophy about her job which she considers her duty and a calling to give a voice to those who cannot speak. She describes her role and job duties as an Asian Family Center (AFC) Energy Assistant with the Anti-Poverty Program and how she is an advocate for her clients. Nguyen talks about the challenges to the position including the barriers community members face to using the services offered as well as how people attempt to abuse the system. She then reflects upon her work as a case manager and how immigrant services have changed and improved since the time her family immigrated to Oregon. Nguyen concludes the interview by reflecting upon the importance of the AFC within the community and gives the analogy of how the organization teaches immigrants to walk, talk, and learn new things again as parents teach their children.

Interview audio available online; transcript forthcoming.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
Asian Americans--Oregon.
Community organization--Oregon.
Immigrants--Oregon--Biography.
Immigrants--Oregon--History.
Immigrants--Oregon--Portland.

Corporate Names:
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (Portland, Or.)

Geographical Names:
Portland (Or.)

Form or Genre Terms:
Oral histories (document genres)

Other Creators:
Personal Names:
Bennett, Sivai.
(interviewee)
Catalani, Ronault LS.
(interviewee)
Cha, Lee Po.
(interviewee)
Chanthavong, Hongsa.
(interviewee)
Cheang, Sophorn.
(interviewee)
Huynh, Danita.
(interviewee)
Le, Thuy.
(interviewee)
Mamaril, Simeon D.
(interviewee)
Nguyen, Linda.
(interviewee)
Nguyen-Truong, Connie Kim Yen.
(interviewee)
Tan, Lyn.
(interviewee)

2015

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