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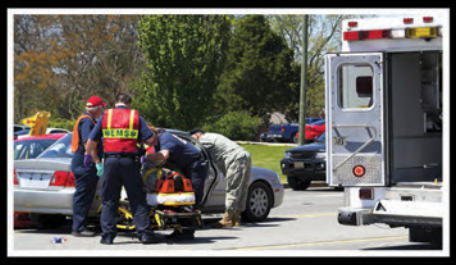
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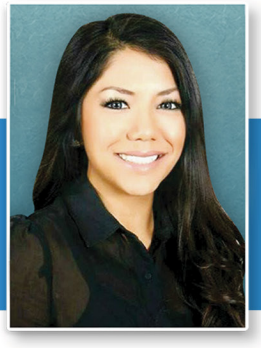
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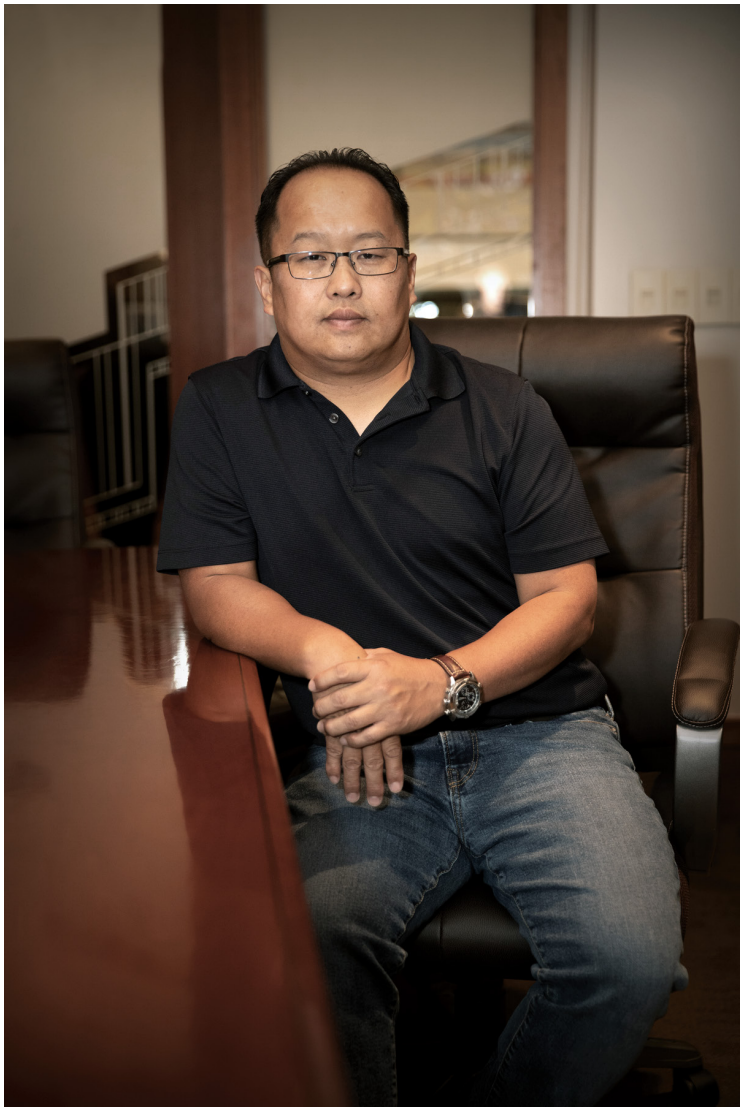


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Youa Za Yang

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Our Hmong Community is defined by our Business Community

Every community is only strong if the businesses within that community are doing well, flourishing and reinvesting back to improve that community. This is especially true in all Hmong communities throughout the central valley.

Who will love, take care of, and nurture our families and our community's future if we don't support our Hmong businesses? Almost all grassroots projects, community and cultural events are funded by local Hmong businesses. They continuously sponsor, give and support causes even though they may be struggling because they still believe that we can only make a difference if we give to make change possible - and because on one else will.

In 1994, I move to Fresno from Modesto and I remember being amazed by the number of Hmong owned businesses. At that time, Fresno was a mecca drawing Hmong families from across the United States. At it's peak in the early 2000's, the Fresno Hmong community reach 45,000 people. What a great time to start a business under these circumstances.

I volunteered and donated my skills as a graphic designer when the business community united to help form the Hmong Business Association where we were able to published our first directory of Hmong businesses in the year 2000.

Communications and partnerships are important to the health of our businesses and to the vitality of our Hmong community. This is what drives my passion to give some much energy to producing the Txhawb magazine year after year.

I am proud that over the last eleven years, Txhawb has networked the large extended businesses of Northern to Central California, becoming an invaluable resource that is available for free to the public.

Txhawb has also provided a unique space to showcase our community's successes and pioneers, while working to preserve and present our culture by documenting and telling the stories of our community and our time.

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Lastly, thank you to all the creative writers, photographers, designers and my sales team for their energy and dedication and hard work.



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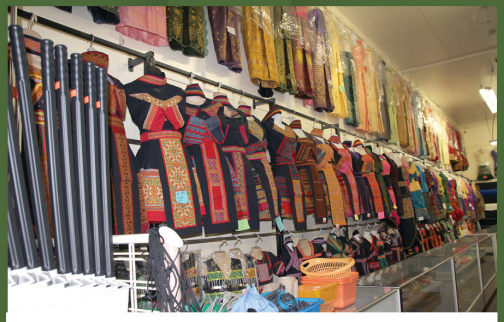
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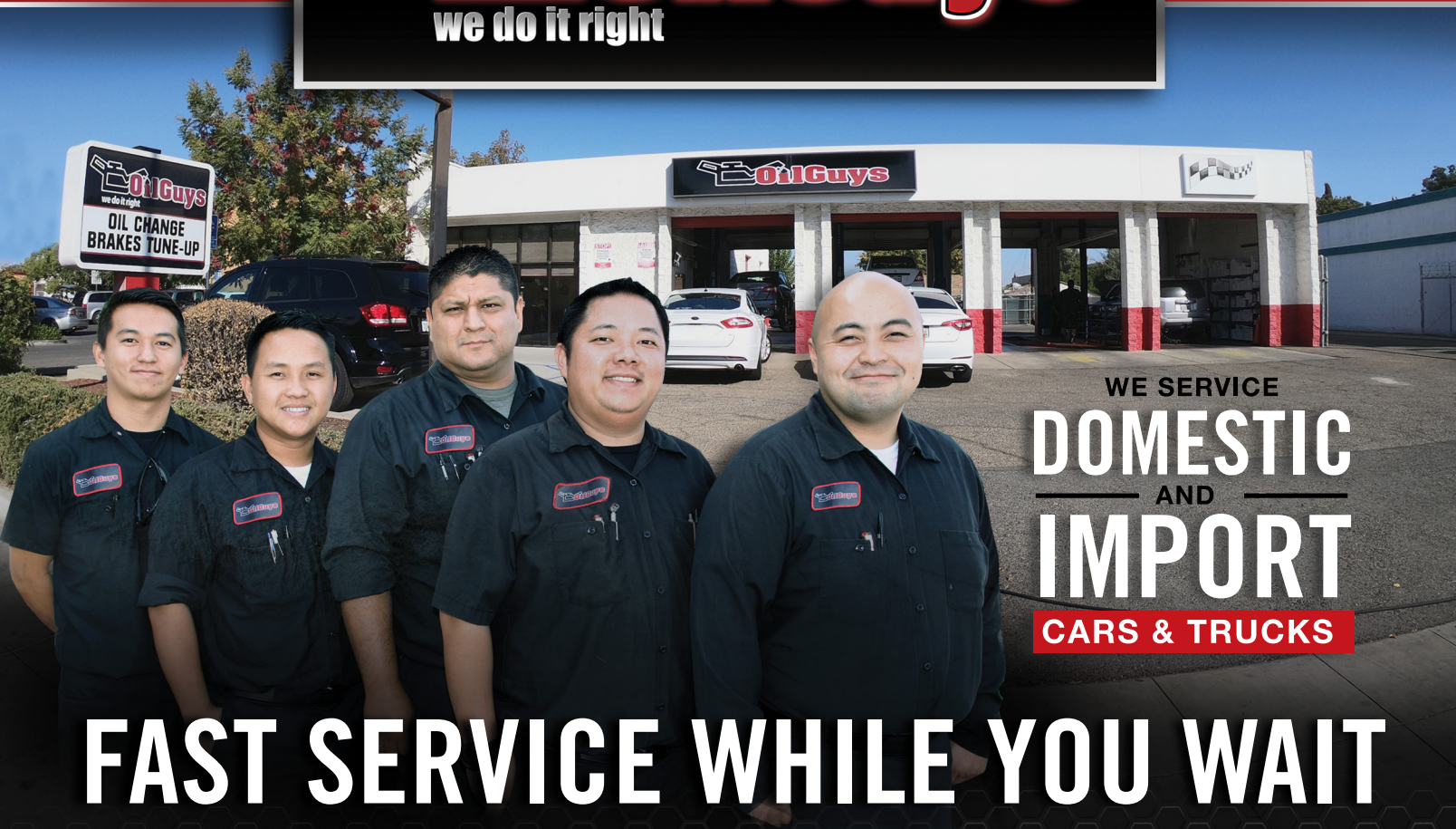
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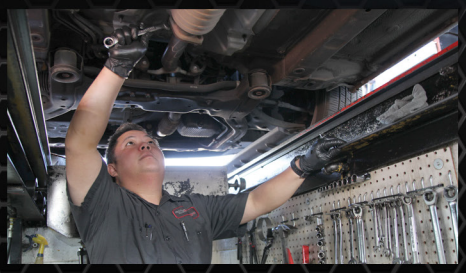


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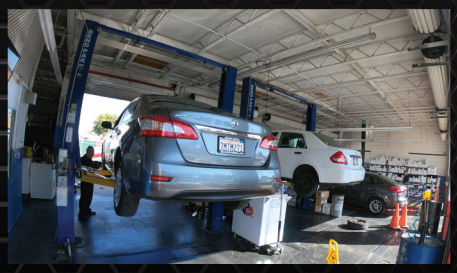
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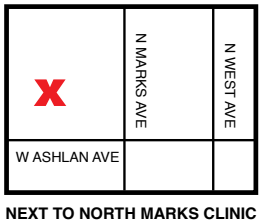
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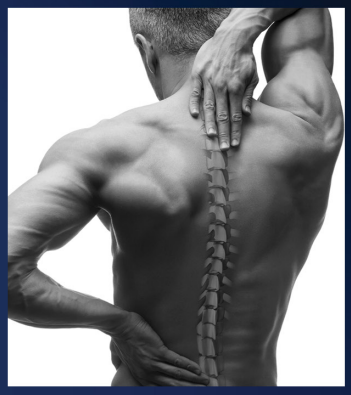
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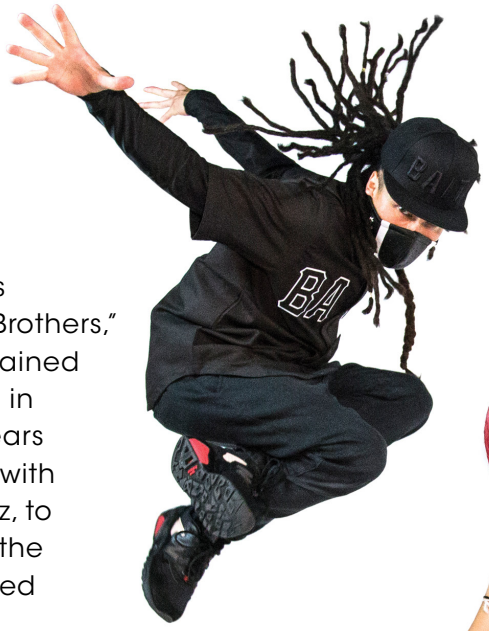
THE LOR BROTHERS

Photo by Vilai Ly

TWINJAZ

Story Pachia Vang

TWIN BROTHERS AND LEGENDARY B-BOYS LONGKA AND LONGKUE LOR



M-PACT + ViIIN

HAVE MADE THEIR MARK IN THE WORLD AS SOME OF THE GREATEST DANCERS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND THE HMONG COMMUNITY.

Known as "The Lor Brothers," they've gained notability in recent years dancing with The Kinjaz, to become the much-loved Twinjaz, performing on shows like America's Best Dance Crew and World of Dance to make way for a new kind of Asian representation that includes Hmong-Americans.



"Hmong B-Boys"

M-PACT and ViIIN grew up in the early 2000s, at a time when B-boying or breakdancing was becoming popular among kids. Rooted in Hip Hop and the urban arts culture, breakdancing gave kids a positive outlet to form friendships and "crews" that left behind a decade of tragedy from the gang violence of the 90s. Instead of seeking acceptance through gangs, as those before them did, kids were now turning to breakdancing as a form of expression that provided a creative outlet, discipline, and meaning in their lives.

As the youngest of twelve, M-Pact and ViIIN grew up immersed in the Hip Hop culture, watching their older brothers and sisters breakdance, rap, and perform on stage. These influences would eventually lead them to their destined paths as dancers. However, never having talked about B-boying together, it was something they'd stumble on coincidentally in their living room, when the universe brought them together to practice for the first time unexpectedly. This synchronicity started the first day of their dance journey together as brothers.

Like many Hmong boys of their time, they danced in search of something bigger than themselves. B-boying gave them the ability to go beyond the walls of their schools and the streets they lived on to find purpose and dreams. Every day they'd come home after school to practice in their family garage for hours, perfecting their techniques and skills. It was here in this ordinary place, that extraordinary dreams would be born. Dreams which didn't just keep them away from the negativities on the streets, but also helped them avoid a generation of trauma and gang violence to find strength, purpose and identity through dance.

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Family First

"In the beginning it was difficult because we didn't even know what it was that we wanted to do, all we knew was dance, and that part was difficult to convey to our parents to make them understand," VillN says.

But, just like how their siblings inspired them to dance, it was also their siblings who lifted them up. From their first breakdancing battles as kids, to their first performances on America's Best Dance Crew, it's their siblings they think of first, who were there to see them grow every step of the way. They were their #1 supporters, driving them to competitions and flying out just to cheer them on from the crowd.

"Being able to do something you love knowing that your family supports you is an amazing feeling because during the time we were growing up in it was really hard for people to even see your dreams. We are grateful that our family believes in our dreams and will be there to support us all the way." VillN shares.

"People often ask us how we get parental support and the truth is that we get our parents involved. We would share every trophy we won with them and invite them to our shows and competitions.

If they weren't able to go then we would at least come back with videos to share with them. To this day, it's still a two way street and we want our parents to understand what the dance culture is," M-PACT adds.

"Even if they don't say much, in their eyes you can see how they feel," VillN says, reflecting on the connection they share. "We would not be where we are without family. Straight up."

Dancing on the world's stage

Their family's support and acceptance is what gave them the ability to excel in breakdancing, becoming two of the best b-boys in Sacramento and establishing one of the most renowned crews in the region called Underground Flow. When they made the decision to attend CSU Long Beach, they joined the collegiate dance group, PAC Modern and expanded their choreography skills. True b-boys at heart, though, they quickly integrated into L.A.'s breakdancing scene where their lives would be forever changed when they were scouted to represent the U.S. internationally.

"It was every B-boy's dream to go overseas and compete," M-PACT remembers. They first went abroad to France in 2006, and blew everyone away at the Temple of Styles competition where they took first place. Even though they were new to

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the global stage, they helped America come out on top, going against B-boys who had come from around the world. When they returned to Temple of Styles 2009 they'd take first place again — accumulating over 12 first place prizes throughout the next ten years.



These weren't just wins for the U.S., they were wins for everything the Lor Brothers represented: Sacramento, their crew, and Hmong B-boys. " If we win, everyone wins," VillN tells us he often says. "If an opportunity can happen to us, then it can happen to you too."

After years of balancing travel and dance alongside school, they eventually came to a point in their lives where they had to ask themselves if all of this was something they wanted to get serious about. M-PACT was majoring in Biology and thought he would go to Pharmacy School at the time. While VillN was a Kinesiology major who was hoping he could at least become a physical therapist for injured dancers, if he wasn't going to dance himself for the long haul. Their dance careers that we know of today, however, wouldn't come to light until they finished school and decided to put 100% of their time into it.

"It's hard because people don't see dancing as a career unless you're already huge. Especially when it comes to breakdancing." VillN shares. "We had to be open to other options of work such as work from the dance industry in Hollywood. We didn't know where to start so we had to learn everything on our own."

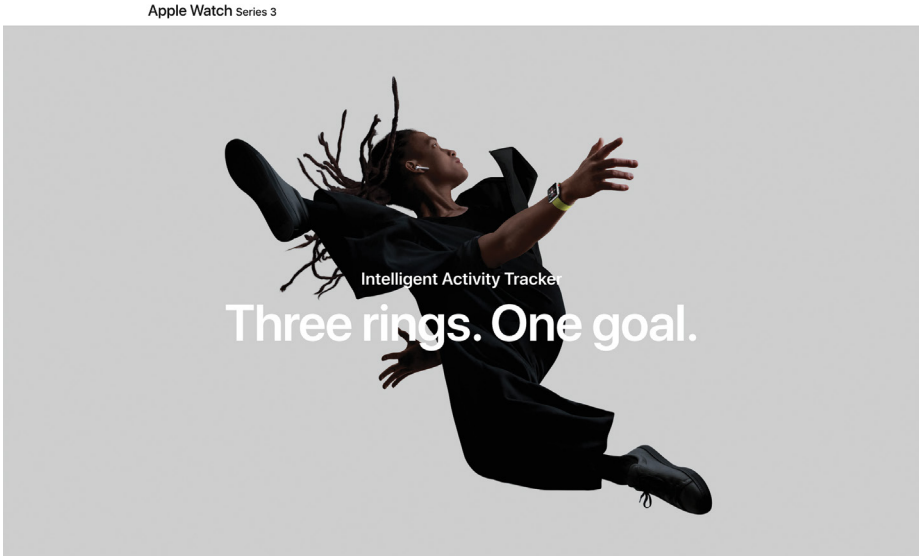
But VillN was all in. He made a professional dance reel and sent it to a talent agency where they quickly picked him up. Once M-PACT finished school, he also joined, moving into another part of their journey as dancers together which they never even thought would be possible. Since then, they've worked with celebrities like Taboo of the Blacked Eyed Peas, Taylor Swift, Chris Brown, Ariana Grande, and Nicki Minaj, dancing in hit music videos and on big shows like the Billboard Music Awards and Saturday Night Live.

Becoming "The Twinjaz"

Outside the glitz and glam of the entertainment industry, M-Pact and VillN have always danced for community and family. The Kinjaz are an extension of their values, building a legacy as a band of brothers who're working collaboratively to innovate, entertain, and positively impact the world through movement, media, and mentality.

Competing on America's Best Dance Crew together, didn't just test the limits of their talent as dancers, but it also pushed them to fight for their artistic integrity as a whole. Because while they were put under the pressure of creating and learning new dances every day, they were also challenged with maintaining what they represented under the guise of "drama" that television producers wanted.

"We were definitely categorized as the 'Asian group' on America's Best Dance Crew, but…Yeah! We are the `Asian group!' That becomes a part of our



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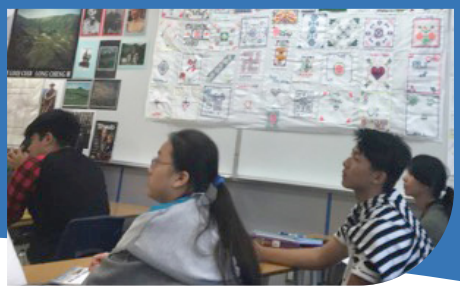
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ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE TWINJAZ THINK THEY'VE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE IT SO FAR WITH DANCE, IS BECAUSE THEY'VE WORKED THEIR WAY FROM THE GROUND UP.



pride and what we want to represent," M-Pact says with a lot of reassurance. And this is an important part of how The Kinjaz have defined themselves through their performances, with pride in their heritage and true, honest expression of who they are as a collective group of artists.

As brothers, M-Pact and VillN often dance together paired as opposites. This is how they earned their name "The Twinjaz" because it's what Anthony Lee, one of the founders of The Kinjaz, would often refer to them as when it was time to get into formation during practices. The name really started blowing up after their older sister, Cindie Lor, came to watch America's Best Dance Crew with a huge "TWINJAZ" sign and the judges caught wind of it. It's been a big thing that's stuck ever since.

Rooted & Humble

One of the reasons why The Twinjaz think they've been able to make it so far with dance, is because they've worked their way from the ground up. Building a reputation for themselves free-styling and battling in the Street Dance community, to perform choreographed pieces on stage in the Urban Dance community. Getting a talent agent to represent them in Hollywood is only one of the more recent things they've done, which rests on everything else that's come before. And returning to give back to where they've come from is important to them.







"As Hmong dancers and artists, we are doing what we can -- the best that we can -- not to show everyone that we are capable, but to show them that we can do this together and the next generation can even go beyond what we've done." - VillN

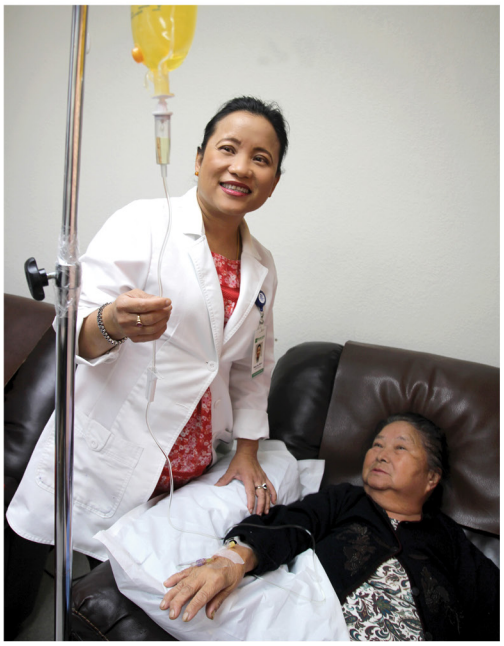
Today, they often return to Sacramento to dance with their original crew, Underground Flow, and participate in community events, teaching confidence through movement to mentor new dancers who look up to them for support and guidance. Their success didn't come over night and they always tell kids to apply themselves and develop goals, no matter how small they are, so that they can have things to work towards.

"Hmong people are some of the best dancers in Sacramento and internationally," M-PACT says, recognizing popular performers like Aidan Xiong, Shayna Vu, LX Vang, the Loonies, Airsteps Crew, Sae Cha, and B-boy Dummy to name a few.

One of the reasons why he thinks Hmong dancers are so good is because we can adapt to new communities really well and we have an affinity for survival. A big part of our culture is also group mentality which, helps us thrive together.

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This, however, can sometimes be limiting because it makes us comfortable with where we are at. We have to really push ourselves beyond these limits to find the space for growth that'll allow us to dream with our eyes open.

"You know that dream you guys have been talking about," their mom asks, "have you accomplished it yet?"

M-PACT laughs, "Mom, I'm already there but there's so much more."

Dance is only one part of what they want to accomplish as artists who are changing the world. Empowering people from all walks of life to believe in themselves and stay inspired is one of their larger goals. One way they're doing this is through their clothing line VII Dose which gives us "a dose of inspiration a day, seven days a week." The both of them were also born on the seventh of the second month, which is what gives this brand so much meaning.

Their "Roots and Culture" collection is an important one which brings together urban wear and traditional Hmong designs. On their travels throughout the world, they've seen how other people rep their own traditional clothes. Creating this collection has given them a way to show how proud they are of their own Hmong heritage and share that with everyone else—not just Hmong people, but people from all walks of life who appreciate and love our unique designs. It's also one way of reminding the younger generation to remember where they come from.

M-PACT and VIIIN are not just dancers, but they are also Hmong sons, brothers, and community members who are creators and artists.

Their accomplishments hit close to home for so many of us, because we share the same home in so many ways. We come from the same neighborhoods and streets, and from the same history and time. In them, we see a piece of ourselves that they too seem to carry with them wherever they go.

It's a connection that comes from being "Hmong." One that makes both their biggest fans and rival crews proud of them for "doing it big for all us Hmong people" and "putting us on the map."

This pride is something you see in so many people, if you just ask around.

What do you think of the Twinjaz aka The Lor Brothers?

"They've inspired me to never give up on my dreams."

"We need more people like them in our community."

"They're one of a kind."

"They've never left us behind."

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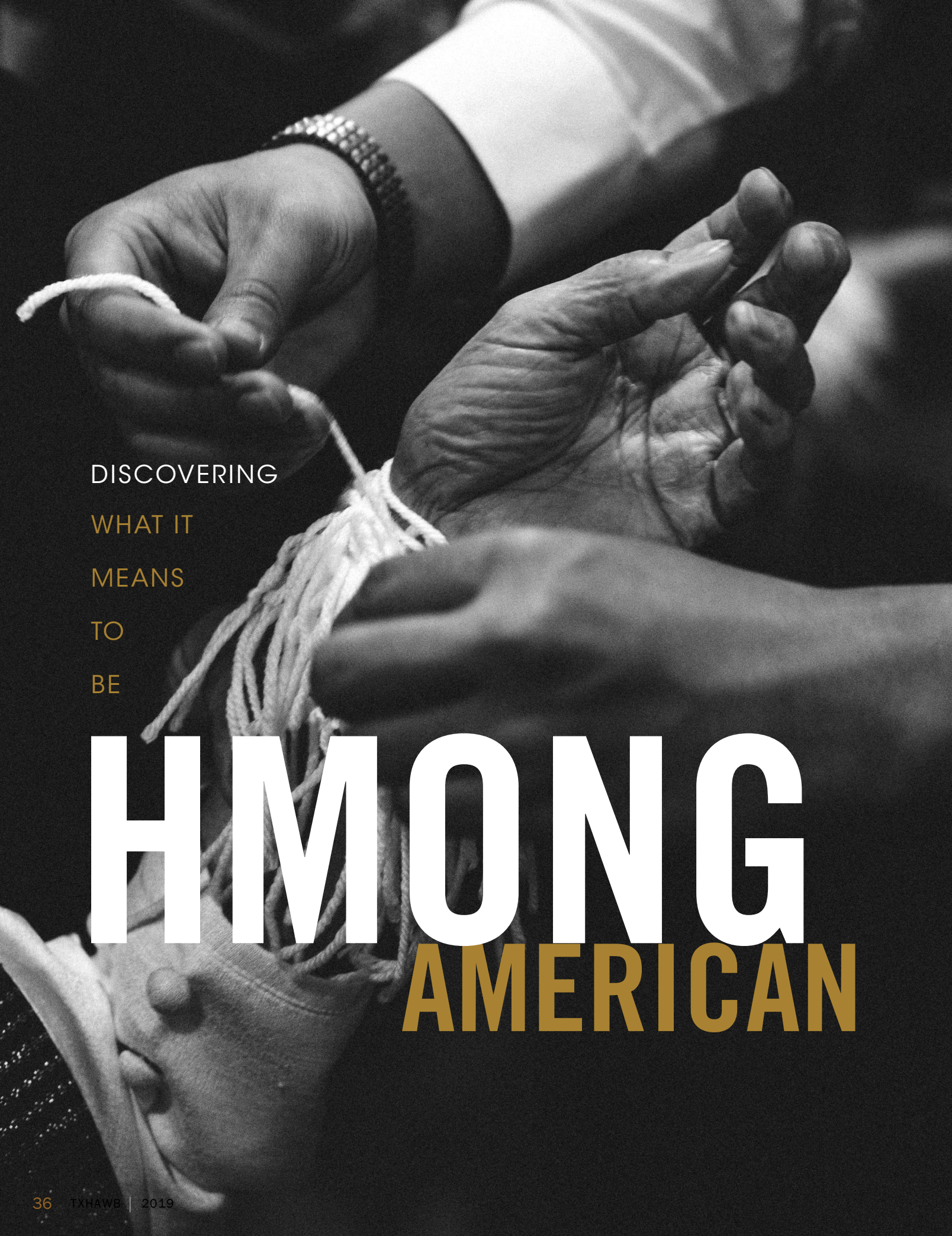
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MY GRANDMOTHER NEVER TALKS ABOUT HERSELF WHEN I ASK ABOUT HER LIFE BACK IN LAOS

Instead, her stories always revolve so deeply around the people she loved. Sitting alongside her in my uncle's house in Fresno, she tells me of the time my father was almost left behind in Laos during the evacuation.

"We all got in the car but there wasn't any room for your dad. He was just a little younger than you, just standing up there on the road while we were all about to leave.

Your grandfather called his name one time, called two times, but he didn't hear. He called a third time, then finally your father came down very quickly right when a soldier's truck came. He was able to get in that truck with them. That's how he got to come. If that wasn't the case, your father would've been left behind."



Story + Photography | Vilai Ly

My grandmother amounts it all up to luck, and as I sit here and write this I have to consider that maybe she is right. There were so many loved ones who didn't make it out Laos, like the mother and father whose little children my grandmother took in while going to Thailand.

"Wherever the kids go, I go also. We came this far, why would we let children go become orphans? I won't let." My grandmother recollected.

No one gets left behind—these were her sentiments towards everyone around her as the war waged on. Her struggle was their struggle. Her triumph was their triumph. Her life was their life, and these sentiments ran true for all of the elders who I've been fortunate enough to listen to.

In listening to the elder's stories, I begin to slowly understand the seed that existed inside all of their hearts, a seed that we've inherited as a new generation of Hmong Americans. This seed, whether we've yet to discover it inside of ourselves or not, is the idea that our lives are not our own—that we create community and community creates us.

As gunfire exploded around them and airplanes ripped through the sky, Hmong people drew their strength from that sense of community. When they had to flee from their villages, it was other Hmong people that provided them a new home to travel with.

You can see this within the United States today. From California to Massachusetts, we congregated together because other Hmong people provided that familiarity and comfort as we built new lives in a new land. Home is often thought of as a place or a location, but to Hmong people, home is the people themselves.

It's taken me 26 years to truly understand that idea for myself. Growing up as a Hmong American meant growing up between two very different worlds. One world was the Hmong community and the other world was American society, each world possessing their own different set of values that clashed against one another.

A shorten version of this story was also published in Sacramento News Review

This constant state of limbo between American values and Hmong values made it difficult to understand what community really was.

While the Hmong values of family and community were present at home, the Western values of individualism and competition consumed my life. This divide was especially jarring growing in Massachusetts, where the Hmong community was much smaller than the densely populated communities found in Minnesota and California. This prevented my Hmong and American life from really ever intersecting. I spent most of my time in school where there were no other Hmong people, causing me to be consumed with these Western values.

From test score rankings to historic American figures like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Adam Smith, this sense of placing the individual ahead of the collective whole was a rampant ideology that pulled me away from my Hmong identity. But even with the school environment pushing individualism onto me, the Hmong values of family and community kept it at bay from truly consuming my approach to life.

It wasn't until college that I started pulling together the various threads of my life in an attempt to understand the enigma of the Hmong American identity. I went to the University of Massachusetts Amherst where I spent the majority of my college career fumbling around with what to do with myself. I tried out an assortment of majors, ultimately decided to major in English because I always enjoyed writing.

But even then, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my degree. At that age, for a lot of Hmong Americans, the possibilities of what we can do with ourselves were extremely limited.



I didn't know any adults who studied English who ultimately figured out a particular path with that field of study. There was no one who could provide a reference point for things I wanted to do.

I wanted to be a journalist, a writer, a poet, but at the time all of those things seemed so naïve and impossible to achieve.

Then the luck that saved my father from being left behind in Laos seemed to save me from my lack of direction in life. Right before entering my last year of college, I inherited my uncle's DSLR camera and became engulfed in photography. For the first time in my life, I felt passionate and committed to something that unraveled a completely new part of my identity. I felt as though I had discovered the artistic part of myself that I rejected for so long.

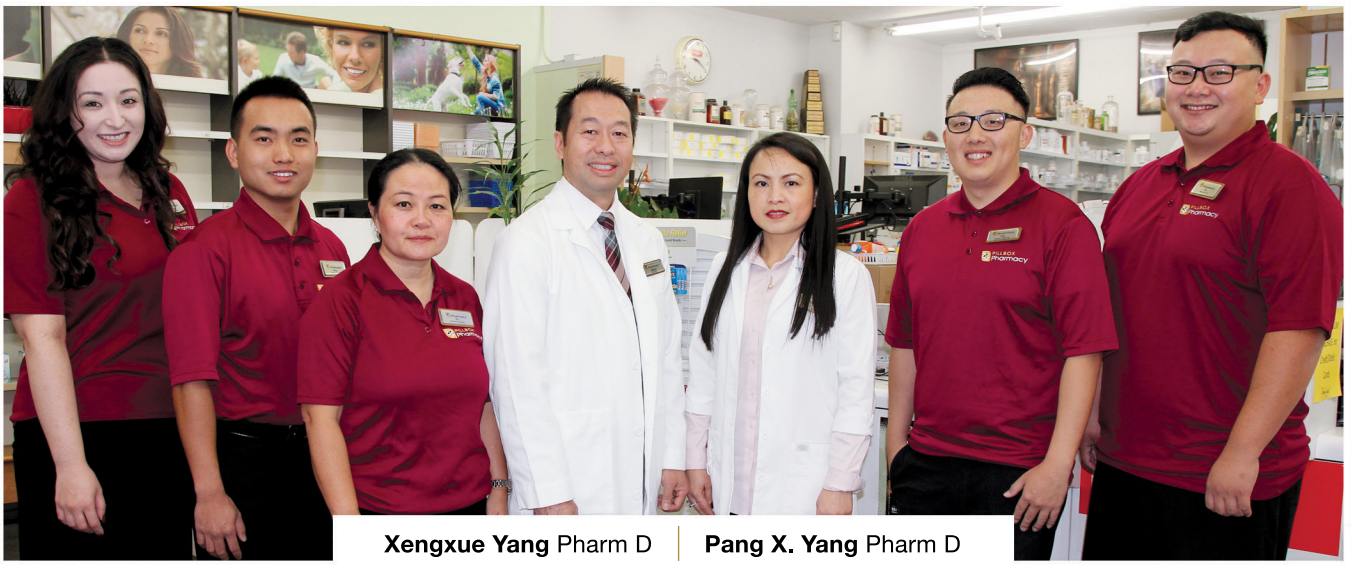
Shortly after, I graduated with my English degree but I built my life around my photography work. I created photography projects focused around the Hmong community to deepen my cultural knowledge. From working with Hmong farmers who continue our traditional agrarian lifestyle to documenting cultural traditions, these projects provided a basis for me to really pay attention to these stories that I overlooked in my childhood.

To further that understanding of my Hmong identity, I decided to move to Sacramento, California at the beginning of 2017 to work closely alongside my partner, Pachia Vang, who was deeply involved in California's Hmong community.

The first project we worked on together was the Hmongstory 40 exhibit in Sacramento which I documented as the photographer. My work there connected me with Noah Vang from Minnesota who was a speaker for the grand opening of the exhibit. He invited me to be a part of the Hmong American delegation going to Guizhou, China in November to experience the Miao New Years and reconnect with that part of our Hmong history.

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This trip coincided with Pachia's trip to Laos, so at the end of November I found myself embarking on a journey between China and Laos to experience a sliver of the Hmong story.

China introduced me to the idea of a global community, one not separated by borders and differing ideologies. The trip culminated to a conference between many of the Hmong, Miao, and Chinese leaders from around the world. Here, they spoke about wanting to build global bridges between the various international communities in order to move forward together. Despite the conflict filled history between China and Hmong people, I felt a genuine intention to move forward into the future together.

The trip to China only lasted for a week, and while it was a beautiful spectacle to experience, it was the simplicity and slow paced trip in Laos that had the most profound impact of me.

My initial Western perspective was to view the chaotic traffic and dusty roads of Luang Prabang as "undeveloped", but my heart was transfixed by the strangely beautiful thread that tied the community together.



There was this one particular intersection that seemed to put me into a trance. This intersection had no stop signs or traffic lights to direct the flow of traffic. Instead, people and drivers alike continuously weaved in and out of one another's way in an unspoken trust between one another.

I fell in love with the communal atmosphere there. People's lives weren't defined by what kind of work they did. Instead, work was just a

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simple means to get by while they put their energy into the people they loved and the community around them. Status and salary wasn't a factor in determining a person's self-worth. For the first time in my life, I was free from that deep sense of consumerism and materialism that plagued my life back in America.

The elders always tell me that they miss living in Laos, and I finally understood why.

Despite the long hours walking back and forth between the farmland and their house, they still yearn for that simplicity of life. It was a life devoted to spiritual and mental wellbeing for everyone around them, a life that was true to their values.

When I landed back into San Francisco, I was immediately faced with the stark cost that came with the comfort and luxury of America. Homeless people panhandling for money during Christmas week as hundreds of people walked by paying them no attention. An incoherent man being punched and thrown into the ground by security guards as everyone watched and recorded. The brief joy of being back home was taken over by this dense atmosphere of a spiritually and mentally sick country, lost to the values of community beyond their immediate circle.

I spent the first morning of 2018 at my uncle's house in Fresno, peeling apart a pomelo fruit for my grandmother to eat. The turn of the new year was devoid of the usual fervor of past year's celebrations. The house was uncharacteristically quiet, besides for my grandmother's walker sliding across the floor and the sound of the knife sliding through the husk of the pomelo as it split open.



I had spent my life stuck in limbo between the crossroads of my Hmong and American world, but in the clarity of that morning I finally felt as though I understood my grandmother's story and discovered what it meant to be Hmong American.

During my trip to Laos and China, I found myself constantly photographing the everyday people who inhabited these spaces. People whose lives contained such a beautiful but untold story, people like myself who grew up believing our lives were insignificant. Upon arriving home, I realized the true impact that everyone had on my life. I realized that my life was not my own, that I create community and community created me.

My life is a continuation of my grandmother's story, of my parent's story—of the Hmong story that unites us all as a people. To know these stories is to know of the seed of community that exists inside all of our hearts. To be Hmong American means to use the tools provided through this country to uplift and empower the people around you so they can see the value in their own life's story.

Regardless of whether they are family or strangers, successful or struggling, alike or unlike you, to be Hmong American means to be there for everyone, to struggle and succeed together like our grandparents did when they came to this country together.

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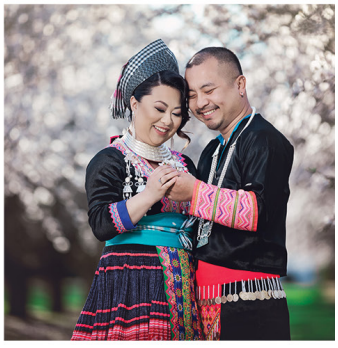












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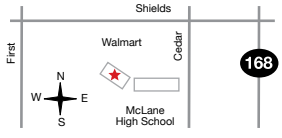
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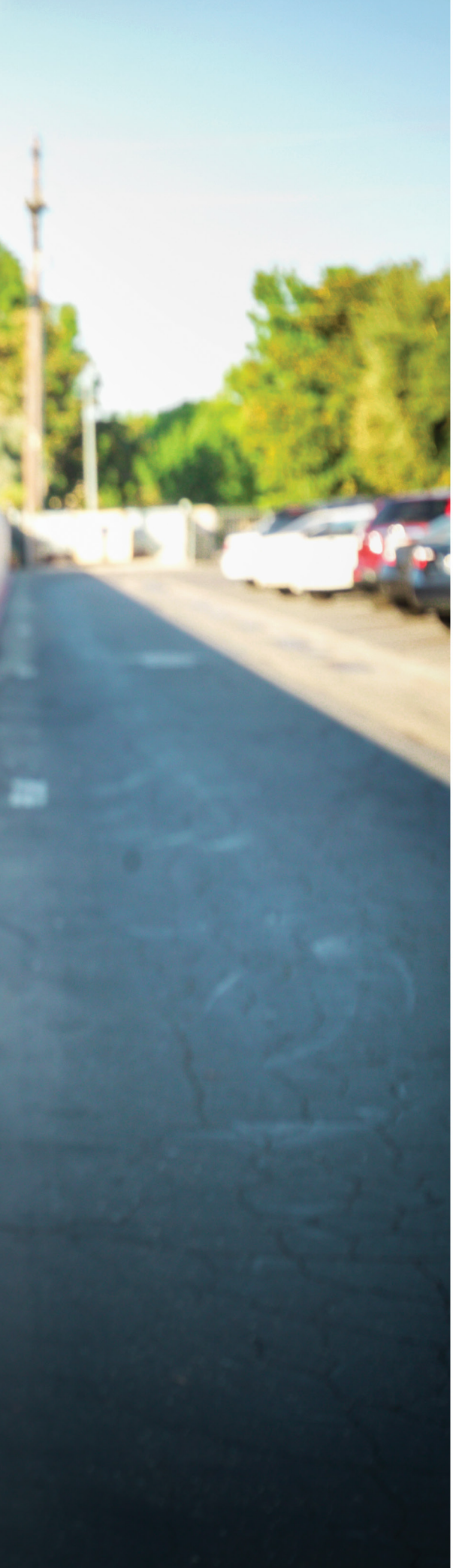
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STONE SOUP

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Story BoNhia Lee | Photography Xiong VFX

People often ask if Stone Soup Fresno is a restaurant. It's easy to get confused although the nonprofit has been around for more than two decades.

While food is sometimes part of an activity or event, Stone Soup has served up educational programs and support services for generations of southeast Asian children ages 0-5 and their families over the last 22 years.

" The concept of Stone Soup is really a beautiful story," said May Gnia Her, a long time parent and former board member who became the organization's fourth executive director in May of 2018.

"The concept is everyone contributing something to the soup and being able to feed the community."

STONE SOUP FRESNO A SOUP THAT FEEDS A COMMUNITY

Founder Kathy Garabed started Stone Soup as just a grassroots taskforce in 1992

Stone Soup was formed to build youth leadership among the immigrant children living in the El Dorado Park neighborhood, just west of Fresno State. It started out with cultural assimilation, learning English and preparing the children to be successful when they started school.

Over time, services for the families were included such as mental health screenings, help with life stressors and referrals to partnering agencies for other social service issues. Cultural preservation has also long been part of the organization's core mission.



Her, who was previously vice-president of community impact at the United Way Fresno & Madera Counties, told the Stone Soup board of directors before she was hired that she wanted to implement some changes if she were to come on board.

"As the new generation of southeast Asians, we can't sit here and call ourselves refugees because we're not. Were no longer refugees. The service has changed," Her said. "I really want to see Stone Soup be a whole lot more inclusive of everyone in the community and truly adding to that pot of soup and blending it," Her said.

Her goal is to make Stone Soup the one-stop-shop for all families with questions no matter your economic or cultural status.

Now, more than 40 years after the first wave of southeast Asian refugees emigrated to the United States, Stone Soup is finding a need to evolve in order to better serve the neighborhood it resides in and the changing demographics of the population it first sought to serve.

"I've always thought we did a really good job with serving our southeast Asian community," Her said, "but at the same time we did a very poor job serving the community outside of southeast Asian."

Today's new refugees come from the Middle East – Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen. Arabic languages are commonly spoken on the Stone Soup campus along with English, Hmong, Lao and Spanish, Her said. And the two dozen staff members reflect the children enrolled in its programs.

The southeast Asian refugee families the agency once served no longer consider themselves new arrivals. Many are seeking services for a different purpose – mommy and me classes, preschool, and cultural and language preservation for their children.

The organization can help with whatever support services it provides - social work assistance, solar workforce skills, English language workshops and food and nutrition programs - and if it can't, there is a community partner who can, Her said.

Soon into her leadership at Stone Soup, Her implemented a rule for all employees to wear shirts with the organization name and logo. It's helped to reintroduce the organization to the community, but it has also created lots of questions including the "are you a restaurant" one, she said.

It's a good conversation starter. The public perception of Stone Soup is that it's a Hmong organization where you go to learn Hmong and cultural preservation.

"I think the public really needs to know that we are truly what the soup represents," Her said. "I would love for the public to know that we are forward thinking. We're trying to create a new generation of children that are culturally competent, are diversely competent."

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I really want to change the thinking of my generation.
We need to shift from the refugee mentality to a mentality of giving back.



She invites all to stop by and see what the organization does and how it's changed. Some of the family programs include social work assistance, solar workforce skills development program, solar systems for qualified families in west Fresno, food and nutrition. There is a preschool on campus and a playgroup program.

The cultural preservation programs that the group has long been known for will return with more vibrancy and consistency than ever, Her said. One of those efforts include expanding the popular Hmong Language Program. Her would like to convert some of the buildings at Stone Soup into space for a variety of language classes to be held during the day and in the evenings.

"We just cannot have enough slots, so we have an overwhelming list of children on a waiting list," Her said. "We hear the call. We hear the need." Expect other new efforts too. Her has a background in philanthropy – donating money to good causes – and she wants to use that experience to encourage more southeast Asians to give back to the community either monetarily or by volunteering their time.

"I really want to change the thinking of my generation. We need to shift from the refugee mentality to a mentality of giving back," Her said.

That's how Her discovered Stone Soup 14 years ago. She was looking to help and participate in an organization that supported the Hmong community. Back then, it was either Stone Soup or the Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, she said. Stone Soup won out because it has a mommy and me program which allowed Her and her baby to participate.

After that experience, Her was asked to form a parent leadership group. It turned into a three-year volunteer position. Then she would eventually join the board of directors for another six to seven years. Now, Her is starting to build a network of professionals to mentor and speak to high school students about their academic and professional journeys.

"Our community traditionally doesn't give back, but they need to," Her said. "They need to understand that it's their turn to be able to help somebody out and refill the pot with more love."

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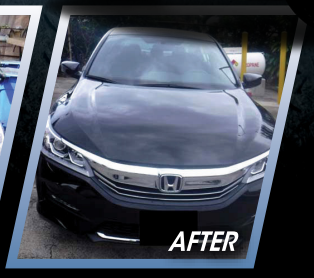
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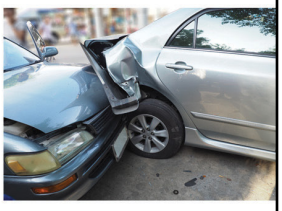
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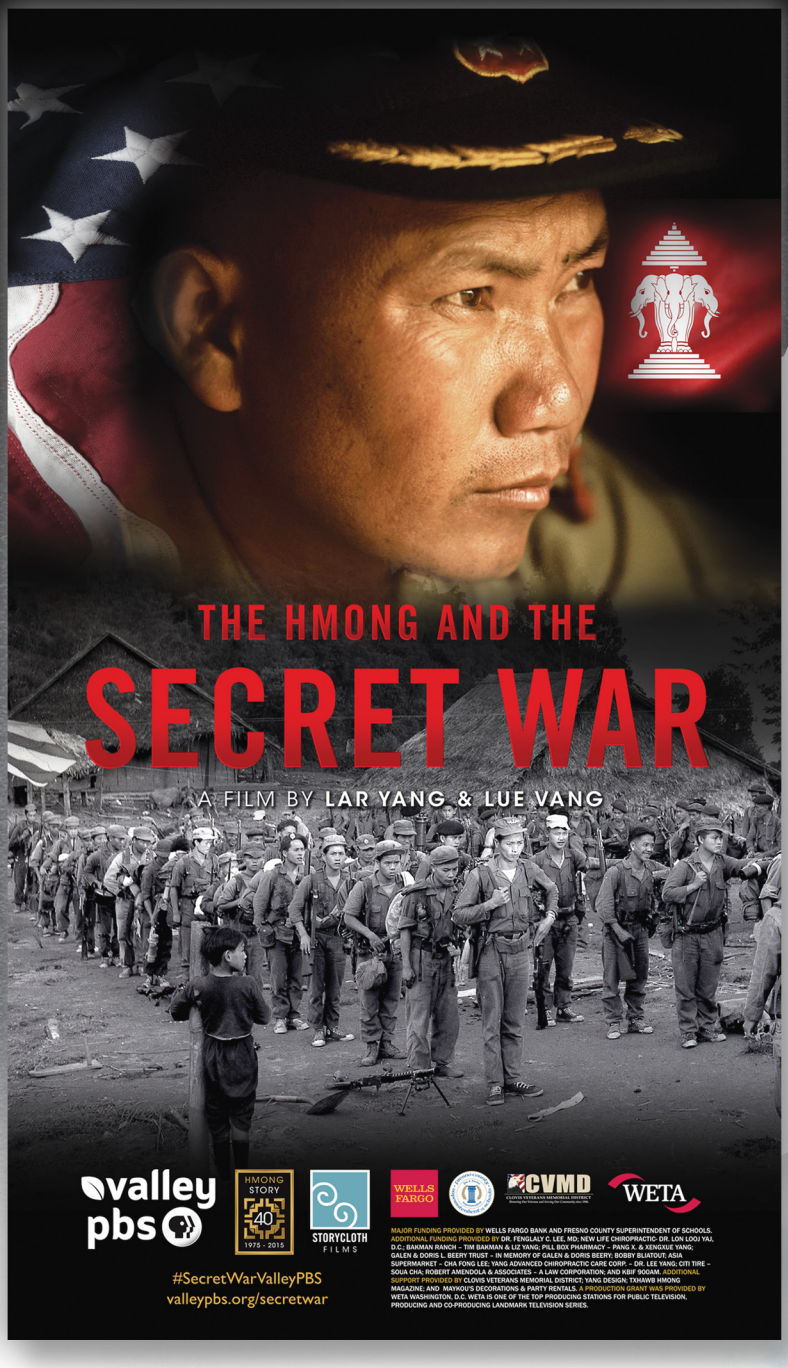


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LEE HERRICK

English Professor,
Fresno City College &
Sierra Nevada College
Low-Residency MFA program

Fresno Poet Laureate Emeritus
(2015-2017)

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THE FRESNO CENTER

A NEW DIRECTION

Story BoNhia Lee | Photography Xiong VFX / Yang Design

For nearly three decades, The Fresno Center (TFC) was known as the place that helps southeast Asian refugees.

The nonprofit, formerly known as the Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA), provided education and employment services. It helped with social integration, health education and housing for the growing Hmong, Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese populations in Fresno County.

During the height of the Hmong refugee resettlement from 2004-2005, the agency was the lead organization in establishing the Hmong Resettlement Task Force in partnership with other local ethnic organizations, elected officials and government services.

It's now been more than 10 years since the last large wave of southeast Asian refugees, and the needs of the community, which now includes first and second generation Hmong Americans, have changed.

"We have to morph into something else," said Pao Yang, a longtime Fresno educator now serving the organization as its third executive director after the retirement of Lue Yang in 2017. "The Fresno Center is more than just a social service agency. We are a community center that provides assistance to folks of all income and education levels. Anyone can come to our organization and utilize the resources we have."

Started in 1991 by Dr. Tony Vang, the agency has grown from three employees to more than 50 employees and from one program to 19 programs serving Fresno County. One of its newest programs provides services across three counties (Fresno, Kings, and Merced Counties) and at least one of its programs is providing services to rural Fresno County communities including Parlier, Del Rey, Fowler, and San Joaquin. Under Yang's leadership, TFC's annual operating budget has nearly doubled to over $4 million, with current total awards of upwards of $18 million.

The Fresno Center changed its name early this year to reflect its new inclusive mission to serve anyone who comes through its doors.

It has two psychologists on staff, 1 psychiatrist, as well as clinicians and employees that reflect the diverse community it serves. Yang encourages the community to visit and learn about TFC's programs.

"Our community is so diverse, but many felt like if you're not a new American, you shouldn't go there," Yang said. "The Fresno Center is about more than just serving southeast Asians who need help or don't understand English."



THE FRESNO CENTER'S MOST IMPORTANT WORK

RESIDES WITHIN THE HOLISTIC CULTURAL & EDUCATION WELLNESS CENTER



The Fresno Center Board of Directors Accepting an Award from Wells Fargo

The agency continues to provide many of its core services although funding for refugee resettlement ended long ago. Now, TFC concentrates on helping immigrants with naturalization and citizenship for free. It can also help clients apply for passports, green cards and petition for a spouse or family member for a comparatively reduced fee.

The agency also prides itself in being a training ground—helping college students with volunteer and internship opportunities at its Fresno office and elsewhere through its longtime community connections.

These days, some of TFC's most important work lies within the Holistic Cultural & Education Wellness Center (Holistic Center) and Living Well Center which provide prevention and early intervention activities for mental health in the form of cultural education and training and direct mental health services at the Living Well Center to southeast Asians adults and youth, respectively.

Through the Holistic Center, community members can come together in a safe space to learn about the customs, traditions and spiritual practices that make up ones cultural identity. Yang describes the Center as a home that embraces and teaches culture with cultural brokers who speak Spanish, Hmong, Lao, Khmer, Punjabi, Hindi, and English to help bridge service gaps.

Through the Holistic Center, Yang hopes to develop programs that will enhance Hmong and English literacy among elders and youth so that both demographics can better communicate with each other. He is also looking to bring back Hmong tapestry lessons and hopes to encourage elders to teach youth about Hmong kwv txhiaj, or singing, and kev cai hmoob, or Hmong traditions.

"We confuse our culture with religion. Our culture is not religion. I think we've lost a lot of that and we want to bring it back," Yang said.

But beyond acculturation services, citizenship and mental health, Yang wants TFC to help move the three generations of Hmong living in the United States forward. Here's how he breaks them down: There are the refugees who came here. There are those who were born outside the United States who came as children. Then there is the first generation of Hmong Americans born here.

> "Now it's not just about social services. It's not just acculturation. It's about meeting the needs and providing assistance for us to thrive as Americans," Yang said. "I really want to share that with our community."

Yang has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, a masters degree in Business Administration and is working on his doctorate degree in organizational leadership. He spent almost a decade working as an engineer in the Bay Area before returning to Fresno to work in education. He now feels a calling to use his experience to help the community in general and the Hmong community, in particular.



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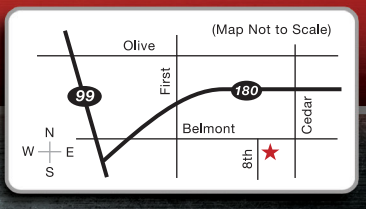
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Pao Yang with Fresno Mayor Lee Brand



Dr. Tony Vang
Fresno Center for
New Americans Founder



Lue Yang
Former Fresno Center for
New Americans Director

"If you understand the vast community needs, and are at my age level, you want to give back," Yang said. "

I realize I can be a voice for my community. I can utilize my education and my experience and the skills that I have to be a strong voice."

He wants The Fresno Center to be the go-to organization for anyone wanting to learn more about the community, especially the Hmong. "TFC is quickly becoming a national contact for immigration issues, social services and other issues pertaining to ethnic communities," Yang said.

The organization is also working to strengthen its relationships and partnerships with elected officials including Mayor Lee Brand, other community groups like Stone Soup Fresno and the Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries, and partners like Fresno Unified School District, Clovis Unified school district, State Center Community College District, Fresno State University, and Fresno Pacific University.

"I WANT
THE FRESNO CENTER
TO BE ONE
COMMUNITY VOICE;
A SAFE SPACE FOR
EVERYONE TO
COME TOGETHER
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- Pao Yang

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Fresno Unified School District

EDUCATION

M.A. - Supervision & Adminstration
California State University, Fresno

B.A. - Liberal Studies
California State University, Fresno

ACHIEVEMENTS

Inspirational Keynote Speaker

Hmongstory 40 Management Team

Kremen School of Education
Noted Alumni Award, Mentor

Association of California
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WHAT I DO AT WORK

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I lead, supervise, and regularly communicate with our Chief Academic Officer and Superintendent the educational programs to prepare college and career ready graduates. I truly believe in bringing equity and access to our children through high quality rigorous education. We fight concentrated poverty with concentrated education.

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in Laos. My family came to the United States as refugees when I was 5 years old. I am the oldest of 6 children. Growing up, I watched my parents struggled trying to make ends meet. I never saw a time where my parents took a vacation or rested. I witnessed the sacrifices they made to ensure their children could be afforded an education. This inspired me very early on to go into education.

I believe that we each have a calling. I have been called to do educational missionary work to impact and change the lives of our kids and their families. I know I have a direct impact in changing the trajectory of the young minds that I have the privilege to interact with every day.

The greatest gift we can give someone is the opportunity to see their full potential. It's incredibly powerful when you give someone HOPE.

"It doesn't cost us anything to be kind to one another"

Always stay true to who you are. Don't compromise your integrity. Believe that speaking your truth brings about innovation instead of remaining quiet just to have harmony.

It is in our most uncomfortable and challenging trials that we learn to spread our wings and fly. We have to go through adversity to be transformed. Just know that you are stronger than you think... Be amazing!

PANHIA MOUA

Chief, Department of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine

Kaiser Permanente
Central Valley Area

EDUCATION

M.D. - Georgetown University School of Medicine

B.A. - Human Biology
Stanford University

ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the few Hmong to be Chief of a Department within a large medical group

Diplomate, American Board of Anesthesiology (Board Certified)

WHAT I DO AT WORK

As Chief of the Department of Anesthesiology, I lead a team of more than 30 physicians and play a pivotal role in the success of the Medical Group and take accountability for the performance of all department members to ensure that our patients receive the highest quality perioperative care & excellent services here in the Central Valley.

I believe that to be a good and effective leader, i must lead by example and demonstrate it through my daily actions. I find my job to be very gratifying and wake up every day feeling fortunate for having a profession that I love.

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in Laos and came to the United States at age 5. My family resided in Montana until I was 11 years old and then we moved to Modesto, CA, where I spent most of my childhood. I came from a poor refugee background in which my parents had to endure long hours in menial jobs to barely support our large family of eleven.

I chose to stay in this area because it is where I grew up and where many of my family members still reside.

I believe in the power of knowledge, education and hard work. My father was a teacher in Laos and even though he could not teach once he came to the U.S., he continued to instill in us the importance of education and emphasized that it would give us wings to take flight. He always stressed that knowledge and higher education would open doors of opportunities for us no matter where we come from.



"YOU MAY NOT CONTROL all the events that happen to you, but you can **DECIDE NOT TO BE REDUCED** by them."

- Maya Angelou

LEE LOR

Merced County Supervisor District 2

EDUCATION

M.A. - Business Administration
California State University, Fresno

B.A. - Criminal Justice
California State University, Stanislaus

ACHIEVEMENTS

First Hmong elected to
County Supervisor in the
State of California - Nov 2016

Co - Founder of Merced KIDS



> **FOCUS, PUT YOUR HEART & SOUL INTO IT AND YOU WILL ACHIEVE**
>
> Stay true to your core values even when others frown on you and keep moving forward. When you compete, compete with yourself first before you compete with others and compete to win.

WHAT I DO AT WORK

The County Board of Supervisors is the highest elected body in Merced county, providing municipal services, infrastructure and economic development opportunities for the unincorporated areas outside cities' boundaries. We also oversee health and human services which are: cash aid, CalFresh, public health, behavioral health & recovery services including mental health services, child support, child/adult protective services, indigent defense, district attorney, sheriff's department, county library, employment training and more.

As a County Supervisor, I help set the budget for these services, create policy and ensure accountability. I am also the representative for Merced County with the state and national associations, working to make our voices heard and fighting for our county to receive the resources needed for success.

BIOGRAPHY

I am the second eldest of 14 children, all of whom were born in the United States. I spent my youth on both east & west coasts, and lived the past 19 years in Merced County. Like many refugee families, the older siblings cared for the younger siblings and we relied on public assistance provided by the County. I married young, despite my goal of college first. My husband Ber and I have four children.

Most of my life, I've always played supporting roles and chose to stay behind the scenes where I witnessed continuous unfair practices. I wanted to stop those practices and ran for public office to increase transparency, ethics and engagement in local government. I also ran to break the barriers within our Hmong culture and across cultures.

KAYING HANG

Vice President of Programs & Partnerships
Sierra Health Foundation

EDUCATION

M.P.H. - Master of Public Health
Boston University, MA
B.A. - Sociology
Minor - Medicine & Health Law Policy
Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

ACHIEVEMENTS

APIs RISE Donor Fund, Founding Member CA

Smart Growth, Steering Committee Member

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)
Board Member

WHAT I DO AT WORK

I serve on the executive team for Sierra Health Foundation and The Center as the Vice President of Programs and Partnerships. In this role, I am responsible for strategic program and partnership development, and oversees management of the foundation's and The Center's programs and initiatives.

Before coming to Sierra Health Foundation, I served as associate director for Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, where I worked with foundations, affinity groups, public policy groups and immigrant rights organizations. Previously, I served as senior program officer at the Otto Bremer Foundation in Minnesota, and a program officer and senior consultant with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation.

In addition to institutional philanthropy, I worked in state government as the state coordinator of the Refugee Health Program for the Minnesota Department of Health, and as the assistant regional coordinator for the Refugee and Immigrant Health Program for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

BIOGRAPHY

I am fortunate to come from a family that values family, community, hard work, higher education and social justice. My seven siblings and I were taught at a young age to take our social and community responsibilities seriously and to never forget those who helped us along the way.

Originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, I am proud to call Sacramento home.



"IT'S GOOD TO HAVE AN END TO JOURNEY TOWARD, BUT IT IS THE JOURNEY THAT MATTERS IN THE END

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

– Martin Luther King Jr.



KIMIKO MOUA VANG

Deputy Director
Human Services Agency
Merced County

EDUCATION

M.A. - Social Work
CSU, Stanislaus

B.A. - Sociology
Minor - Ethnic Studies
CSU, Stanislaus

ACHIEVEMENTS

First Hmong Deputy Director in Merced County and highest ranking Hmong in a County Department leadership position in California

WHAT I DO AT WORK

I am currently the Deputy Director of the Employment & Training Branch at the Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) where I oversee a team of 90 staff working in several social services programs, spread over three locations throughout the County.

Under my leadership, the Hmong Women's Initiative was created at HSA as a unique program that partners with and empowers Hmong women on their journey to self-sufficiency and well-being. With the collaboration of partner agencies, we host a biennial Hmong Women's Conference in Merced that draws Hmong women from throughout the state.

My professional path reflects a life-long journey to serve disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and communities in the pursuit of social justice.

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in a Thai refugee camp in the aftermath of the Secret War in Laos, then immigrated to France where I grew up in a multicultural community.

My family eventually moved to the United States to be closer to extended family. The backdrop of my family and community's immigrant stories, along with my own personal early experiences ignited my passion to serve disadvantaged populations.

While higher education and hard work gave me opportunities for a fulfilling career and professional achievements, I credit the strong Hmong women in my life who showed me that Hmong women could wield the power of resilience, grit and intelligence. This notion continues to fuel my commitment to building a community of strong Hmong women.

> **"If it's not there, dream it up and create it. Make it happen.**
>
> You won't always know what you want or know what to do. But if you choose to be a life-long learner and work towards something greater than yourself, you will get there."

BEATRICE VANG HAZELTON

Entrepreneur
Business Woman

EDUCATION

Studied Business & Finance
California State University, Sacramento

ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievement Award
Heritage of America Educational & Cultural Foundation

Community Service Award
American Association of University & Women League of Women Voters in Bakersfield

Leadership in Business Award
National Republican Congressional Committee

WHAT I DO AT WORK

I currently own and operate two businesses: a driving school and tax representation business. I started both 25 years ago. I also serve on the Hmong Civil Rights Organization, Kern County AIDS Advisory Board, and Bakersfield Lao Buddhist Board

BIOGRAPHY

I came to American in 1975. I had my first child at 14 as a Freshman in high school, and my second child two after graduation.

Being a young Hmong wife and new mother in an unfamiliar country was extremely difficult. There was no room or opportunity to pursue my dreams of becoming a doctor or business professional. I willingly put my dreams aside to fully support my husband in achieving his dreams and took care of my children at home.

In the following 17 years and in spite of facing a physically abusive marriage, I became a very accomplished female. I helped my husband build, own, and operate two restaurants; volunteered for community organizations like Planned Parenthood; served on boards for non-profits that serve underrepresented groups; and raised two children.

Then, I became a single mother. I had little to no emotional or financial support and lived hours away from my family. In this difficult time, I realized that the only way I was going to provide a better life for my children was to build something of my own. Inspired by my brothers who ranked high in the Hmong military and figures like Mother Theresa who cared for the less fortunate, I was able to persevere through these hardships in order to give back to my community.

I picked myself up and did what I had to do for myself and my children. I capitalized on my business acumen and became an entrepreneur. I started a driving school and tax representation business, and also purchased, improved, and sold an auto repair shop. I also continued to serve on non-profit organization boards and received many awards for my service.



"SUCCESS RARELY COMES WITHOUT FALLING"

Despite what others say or how they may judge you, persist, work hard, and follow your dreams. And when you fall, get up. Adventure, explore, and work within your community and also adventure outside - growth and success are everywhere.

To the young women, do not be discouraged by a patriarchal culture - be encouraged by the Hmong women around you who are successful, intelligent, and diligent. And to both the young men and women, do not let failures keep you down, let them motivate you to succeed.



> **MY FATHER ONCE TOLD ME**
> that since I'm Hmong and one of his daughters, it is bred in us to take the challenging path of exploration because the rewards are greater in the end.

GERI YANG-JOHNSON

Vice President & Community Relations
Senior Consultant
Wells Fargo

EDUCATION

B.A. - Women's Studies
California State University, Fresno

ACHIEVEMENTS

Founder of Mala Scholarship Fund
Funders Network PLACES Fellow
City of Fresno Women Leading the Way Award Trailblazer Award
Fresno 40 under 40
Bankers Without Borders Global Fellow

BIOGRAPHY

For more than 15 years, I have dedicated my career to improving Central Valley and California communities through advocacy, philanthropy, and development.

As vice president and community relations sr. consultant, I am charged with implementing Wells Fargo's community and economic development programs in Central California including the coastal communities of Monterey.

In this role, I maintain the company's Community Reinvestment Act initiatives that support underserved populations and represents the company in all aspects of community outreach. In addition, I serve as a Board Member for The California Wellness Foundation whose mission is to advance wellness for the people of California by increasing access to health care, quality education, good jobs, healthy environments and safe neighborhoods.

BIOGRAPHY

I was named after CIA agent "Jerry Daniels" who helped resettle Hmong families and served alongside the Hmong soldiers during the Secret War.

I was born in San Diego but my family relocated to Fresno in 1994. One of 13 children from a farming family in the Central Valley, I spent many summers and afterschool hours in the fields to help my family make ends meet.

This experience gave me firsthand exposure to the hardships that many immigrant and working families endure. It has guided my desire to lift up socioeconomic conditions for all.

GIA VANG

TV News Anchor, Fox 26

EDUCATION

B.A.- Journalism
Minor - Family & Consumer Sciences, Apparel Marketing & Design
Sacramento State University

ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the Few Hmong women to Anchor News in a Major Network Television Channel

WHAT I DO AT WORK

As a T.V. news anchor, I get to come to work each day and talk to my colleagues about what's going on in our local communities, the country, and the rest of the world. We get to decide what important stories impact our viewing area that day, and how to present that to the public that evening.

There's a lot of preparation work through the rest of the hours leading up to the newscast. That includes writing, more discussions, and perhaps breaking news stories that we need to fold into our show. Once it all makes air, it's up to the public to form their own opinions.

I know it's a pretty special thing when you start off with a clean slate each time you go into work, and end up with a product essentially built from scratch.

BIOGRAPHY

I remember growing up in Sacramento, my parents would sit around the television and watch the local news every night before bed. I had always been fascinated by newscasters. But as a young Hmong girl, I never imagined I'd ever be a news anchor because I didn't see anyone who particularly looked like me in those days. From an early age, I knew I wanted to impact the world, to make it better-not just for my family, but for my Hmong community. I enjoy writing, and I love human connections. Journalism seemed to marry my passions and my yearning to make an impact. After I stepped into a newsroom my junior year of college as an intern, I was hooked. But it would be a long journey full or failures and resilience before I realized my dream of becoming a news anchor.



"CONFIDENCE IS KEY

To expand on that, you've got to learn how to forgive yourself when you fail, either professionally or personally, realize being vulnerable is powerful, and then live your life so authentically, it's blinding."

MAI YANG VANG

School Board Member
Sacramento City Unified School District
E.D. Buck Scholars Association

EDUCATION

M.P.H. - Masters Public Health
M.A. - Asian American History
University of California, UCLA

B.S. - Biology
B.S. - Sociology
Minor: Chemistry, Business
& Asian American Studies
University of California - USF

ACHIEVEMENTS

First Hmong elected in city of Sacramento
Frank H. Buck Scholar - Full Ride Undergraduate and Graduate studies





"AS A FORMER HIP ORGANIZER, I LEARNED QUICKLY THAT IF YOU DO NOT VOTE, YOU DO NOT MATTER TO THOSE IN POWER.

Your vote & your voice is one of the most important tool to change the social conditions for those you love and communities who are most marginalized. The personal is the political, the political is the personal. If we do not turn out to vote, if we do not engage, if we do not run for office; then decisions that impact our families and communities will be made FOR us not BY us."

WHAT I DO AT WORK

Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) serves over 43,000 students, on 76 campuses. As the Trustee for Area 5 in SCUSD, I represent one of the poorest neighborhoods in the school district. Area 5 in Sacramento is comprised of Meadowview, Parkway, Cabrillo, Florin, and Detroit neighborhoods in south Sacramento. Currently, we have over 4,000 Hmong students in our district.

As a school board member, my role is to be responsive to the values and priorities of the community. Board members sets the vision and goals for the district, monitors the budget, ensures accountability, hire and evaluate the superintendent and most importantly, is a fierce advocate for our children – especially our students who are most marginalized.

BIOGRAPHY

I'm a proud Sacramento native and the eldest of 16 children. As a child, my parents believed that public education was the key to a better life for my siblings. After becoming the first in my family to graduate from college, I returned home determined to improve the community that raised me.

In November of 2016, I was elected to the Sacramento City Unified School Board. Prior to serving on the School Board, I was a community organizer with Hmong Innovating Politics and worked as the Community Affairs Director for a Sacramento City Councilmember. Currently, I'm the Executive Director for the Buck Scholars Association, a network of scholars expanding educational opportunities for low-income high school students in northern California. I also teach at UC Davis and Sac State in the Department of Asian American Studies.

FENGLALY C LEE

Medical Doctor
OB/GYN, Board Certified
Fellow - American College of OB/GYN

EDUCATION

B.S. - Physiology, UC Davis
M.D. - UC Davis School of Medicine

ACHIEVEMENTS

California's First Hmong Obstetrician and Gynecologist

Faculty Member of UCSF School of Medicine

Business Owner of a Large Medical Practice Owner of Multiple Clinics

WHAT I DO AT WORK

I became California's first Hmong Obstetrician and Gynecologist in 2003 and have been in private practice since 2007. I am currently the Co-owner and President of Omni Women's Health Medical Group which oversees several medical clinics throughout Fresno and Clovis. I own and practice out of two clinics near CRMC-Fresno providing pregnancy and women's health care. I also serve part-time as a faculty member of the UCSF - Fresno OB/GYN residency program. I enjoy teaching and working to encourage young physicians to learn and become compassionate, competent doctors. I am currently the Vice - Chair of the OB/GYN department while also sitting on multiple committees at Community Regional Medical Centers in Fresno. I am a member of the Fresno-Kings-Madera Regional Health Authority Quality Improvement and Management Committee.

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in Vientiane, Laos. I have eight siblings, and I was born after four brothers. My position as the eldest daughter after four boys meant that I tried to do what my brothers could do, but at the same time had to bare the responsibilities of being the eldest Hmong daughter. As I was growing up, I resented having to work at the farms, tend to the household chores, and help out at my dad's company. But today I look back and cherish the work ethic that it instilled in me.

This work ethic allowed me to balance being a loving mother to my three children and a caring wife to my husband - Long Lao, all while pursuing my medical career starting at the age of 19. I studied medicine at UC Davis School of Medicine and then went to UCSF-Fresno where I completed my residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology. I was Valedictorian, voted as medical student of the year, resident of the year, and then faculty of the year.



"ALWAYS STRIVE TO DO THE RIGHT THING
no matter how tired, angry or pessimistic you may feel at the moment. You'll find that not only will you find peace for doing so, but one day, the favor may be returned when you need it most."



PALEE MOUA

Interpreter Trainer within California's Healthcare Organizations

EDUCATION

A. A. - Liberal Studies
Merced Community College

ACHIEVEMENTS

In collaboration with Claudia Angelelli, Ph. D., from the San Diego State University, she served as the principal interpreter and translator of a comprehensive health glossary for Hmong interpreters, and assisted in the development of other Hmong medical and mental health curriculum resources used to formally train Hmong interpreters throughout Central Valley.

WHAT I DO AT WORK

Today, I am a recognized interpreter trainer within California's healthcare organizations. I've served as the principal translator to a comprehensive health glossary for Hmong interpreters, and assisted in the development of other Hmong medical and mental health curriculum resources used to formally train Hmong interpreters throughout Central Valley. I co-founded the Partners in Healing Program that recognize Hmong shamans as an important and vital role in the spiritual healing process. Through our efforts, Hmong shaman were allowed to perform traditional ceremonies in Merced hospitals without Hospital staff supervision.

I continue to lead shaman orientation classes and support them in their continuing educational to fulfill requirements to meet the needs of the hospital. I served as a board member at Southeast Asian American Professional Association (SEA-APA). I currently serve as the Director of Southeast Asian Services at Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Health Equity Project, where I advocate for local policy changes to meet the health needs of the diverse community. I work for Merced County Human Services Agency as Coordinator for Hmong Women's Initiative Special Project.

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in Xieng Khouang Province, Laos in 1955 as a granddaughter to Lo Kaitong Blia Yao. I was one of the few fortunate Hmong girls to receive an education through the Lao-French school system in Vientiane, Laos in the early 1970's. I came to the United States in my early 20's with my husband and three children. We first settled in Richmond, Virginia in 1976 but ultimately settled down in Merced County in 1977. There, I enrolled in Merced College to hone my communication skills that I then used to help the local clinic and WIC programs. It was here that I began my lifelong calling in healthcare advocacy and professional interpretation services for Hmong families, especially for Hmong women in family planning and prenatal care.

"NO ONE PERSON KNOWS EVERYTHING
Always be open minded and willing to open your heart to educate others without prejudgice to their ethnicity or gender."

All Profile Photos by Xiong VFX.net - Thai Xiong

LOUANSEE MOUA

Chief of Staff / Office of
Councilmember Tam Nguyen
City of San Jose

EDUCATION

M.A. - Business Management
Concordia University, Saint Paul, MN

B.A. Mass Communications
and Radio & Television
Campbell University, Buies Creek, NC

ACHIEVEMENTS

Breaking Barriers in Television & Politics
Television Broadcast Journalism
WTVD & WNCN Raleigh, NC
CNN-International in Atlanta, GA
Twin Cities Public Television, MN

WHAT I DO AT WORK

The City of San José has more than one million residents and is the 10th largest city in the nation. The city is divided into 10 council districts. I am the Chief spokesperson on all matters related to the Council District 7 office which is represented by Councilmember Tam Nguyen. I am responsible for directing and overseeing the day-to-day operations; provide research and analysis on a wide range of issues affecting the City; & work with elected officials, the public, and the press on creating effective policies that will provide a good quality of life for all who live in the City of San Jose. Some policies that I have worked on include raising the minimum wage, ban on plastic bags, regulation of cannabis dispensaries, and affordable housing. It can be challenging and thankless work but I continue to do it because it may help to change the lives of many.

BIOGRAPHY

I was 4 years old when my family fled Laos to the United States. We resettled in Selma, Alabama where blacks and whites lived separately and the KKK marched in parades. I didn't know it then, but our life in the South greatly influenced the work I do today.

We eventually moved to Appleton, Wisconsin where my father went to work for a paper company and my mom kept herself busy with 10 kids and farming. I spent all my summers picking cucumbers, weeds, and worms. This was not the life I wanted. I worked hard to graduate from high school and went far away to college. I had a brief career in television broadcast journalism working for WTVD and WNCN in Raleigh, CNN-International in Atlanta and Twin Cities Public Television in St. Paul before delving into politics.

For the past 18 years, I ran political campaigns and served on various administrations. I currently serve as the Chief of Staff for the office of Councilmember Tam Nguyen. Prior to that, I was the Chief of Staff to former Vice Mayor Madison Nguyen and Minnesota State Senator Mee Moua



"WE CANNOT SEEK ACHIEVEMENT for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own." — Cesar Chavez



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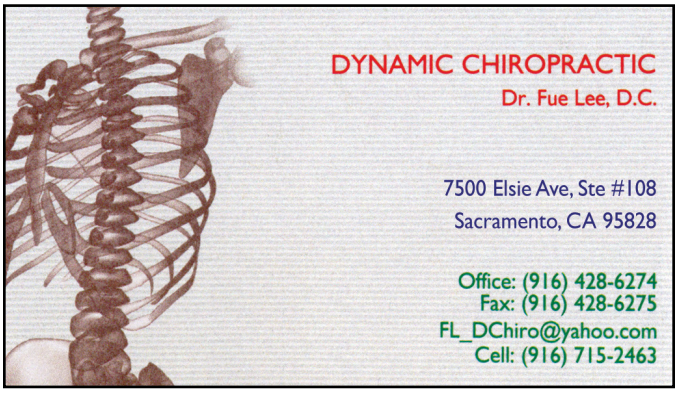
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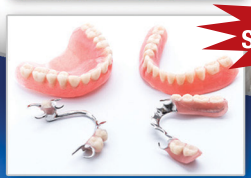
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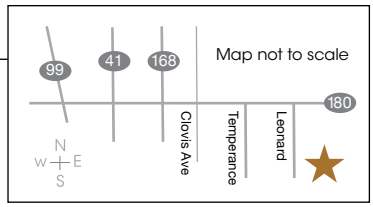
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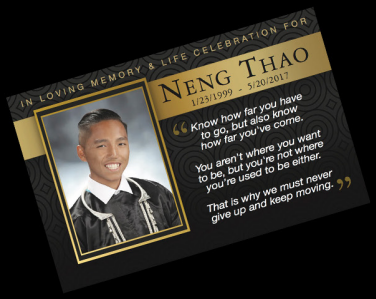
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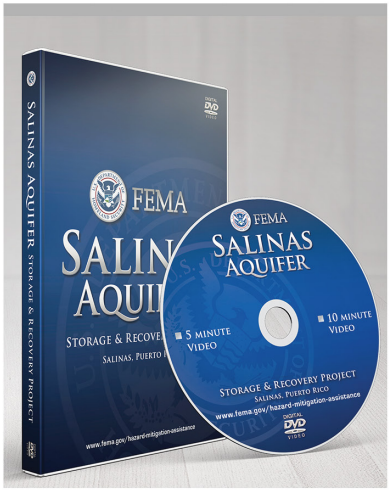
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