



DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES

Lao Advancement Organization of America serves the community through three program areas Youth, Health and Community Empowerment.

AREA 1: Youth Programs for Success in Education and in Life use best practices in *youth development* to build social and leadership skills, self-confidence and pride in cultural heritage in each youth, while at the same time providing support that will assist participants in completing high school and pursuing post-secondary education. These *out-of-school time programs* combine academic support like homework help and intensive tutoring in math and English with social, recreational and cultural activities to keep youth engaged over an extended period of time in supervised, fun and educational activities in a safe and supportive environment. *Saturday School* (Year-round, 3-4 hours every Saturday at LCC building): Intensive one-on-one & small group math and English tutoring, *homework help*, cultural activities, recreational activities, fun math and science learning to help youth "catch up" to their grade level. *Soccer programming* supports 3 boys/girls teams in practice and in competitions. *SinhNa Champa Dance Program*: Provides free dance instruction on a weekly basis to students, ages 6-23, in the three forms of Lao dance (classic, folk, and social). At the conclusion of dance instruction, students perform at major celebrations and events (e.g. Lao New Year, and the Festival of Nations), as well as many community programs. In 2007, 90 youth received tutoring and homework assistance; 60 youth and 20 parents participated in field trips to learn about post-secondary education options; 35 youth participated in culture and dance classes. Parent education, in 2007, 40 parents attended parenting education workshops to empower them with knowledge about the expectations schools and other systems have regarding the roles and responsibilities of parents.

AREA 2: Health Education and Prevention programs -- reach youth and adults with important *preventive health information*. Joint programming with the YWCA of Minneapolis provides *adults and elders weekly exercise classes* at Lao America. The U of MN Extension Service provides quarterly *nutrition education classes*. *Sports programming* includes the Lao Minnesota Soccer Organization (LMSO) which engages 70 adults in soccer each year. *Chemical Prevention education* is provided by two staff members who are certified prevention specialists. participated in ATOD prevention classes. The Elders Program served 55 elders in 2007 to reduce isolation, improve health and increase knowledge of the community. The Elders program includes *fitness activities* such as *ethnic dance, exercise, education on health and other related issues*, and a time to *socialize*.

AREA 3: Civic Engagement and Community Empowerment -- *Citizenship education*, 25 people participated in classes, 36 completed citizenship applications and 14 people obtained their citizenship. *English as a Second Language classes* served 18 adults and elders in 2007. The Community Empowerment Programs also provide referrals and advocacy for individuals and families needing *assistance in negotiating social services, legal, educational and other complex systems*. *The Community Leadership Project* started in November 2007 with its first meeting having 32 individuals from 13 Lao organizations starting a learning process about *non-profits, governance, civic engagement, planning, partnerships, finances and fundraising*. *The Computer Lab* provides access to computers and programming for youth and Lao community members (of all ages) to increase technical literacy and improve communication and employment skills. In 2007, 40 youth, 9 adults and 54 elders accessed training at the computer lab.

AREA 4: (PART OF GENERAL OPERATING): Our building, The Lao Cultural Center, provides a welcoming place for community education for all people and for Lao community gatherings.

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