Cultivating Safety, Healing & Power

Leadership from Survivors at the Margins

API CHAYA ANNUAL REPORT
Dear Beloved Community,

Thank you for supporting API Chaya’s mission, services, and programs. The past year has been one of the most harrowing and heartbreaking for us all, and especially those also experiencing harm at home or at work. Your financial gifts and volunteerism make it possible for us to build a community where survivors have access to safety, pathways to healing, and support to thrive.

As we closed out this unprecedented year and our 25th as an organization, we look forward with hope and conviction to a future of deep transformation and a world free of violence. In 2020, API Chaya moved to a Co-Director model, moving us—two survivors and longtime staff—into executive leadership. With this community-supported decision, API Chaya moves closer to embodying the values we seek to nourish in our movements for justice: sustainability, well-being, strength in shared power and diversity, and the cultivation of joy at the individual and collective level. Moving into leadership during this particular time is challenging, but thanks to our incredible staff, board and communities, we are finding our ground.

2020 brought so much for us to mourn, and also so much for us to celebrate. This is a time of upheaval, and with that comes possibility of real change. From the millions of people marching in the streets for an end to systemic racism and forging new ways of achieving justice, to the millions around the world struggling with COVID—we know this is a time where we must address problems at their roots. We will continue our work on the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal level to support those being made the most vulnerable, and to shift the conditions that allow harm to happen.

Today, we are still witnessing increases in domestic violence and are concerned for children and vulnerable adults living at home with abuse. We know that isolation also creates the conditions for human trafficking to persist. We urge communities to stay connected to one another in this time, and create opportunities for potential survivors to seek help, seek connection, and find healing. API Chaya is always here for you—we need all of us to come together to create the world we want.

Together, we can achieve a safe, healing, and vibrant community.

Priya Rai & Kalayo Pestano
Executive Co-Directors
Advocacy & Survivor Services

API Chaya’s advocates partner with survivors in their long journey of moving from crisis to the many paths of healing

Served 700+ Survivors with direct advocacy services

From 21 countries of origin

Speaking 38 different languages

70% domestic violence

22% sexual violence

11% human trafficking

57% immigrants & refugees

33% limited English speakers

23% people with disabilities

11% LGBTIQ

Many of our clients are survivors of multiple forms of harm.
ADVOCACY & SURVIVOR SERVICES

We strive to meet the constellation of needs that might arise for someone moving through crisis. In 2020, one survivor got over 194 hours of support from our advocates.

This year we provided clients with the same high-level of free, confidential, and culturally relevant services, despite COVID restrictions. We used creativity and our hard fought knowledge and skills to meet survivor needs during lockdown, including covert delivery of cell phones, offering ride-share services, providing wifi hotspots, and more. Your individual support provides the flexibility we need to stay nimble enough to meet these changing conditions.

In a year so difficult for all of us, we were able to support survivors to work towards stability, and achieving their dreams, including:

- Providing the financial assistance needed for our hundreds of clients to meet their basic needs when working towards safety.
- Staying with clients through the spectrum of emergency, temporary, and finally permanent housing.
- Securing visa status, allowing survivors to stay in the United States free from fear of deportation.
- Family reunification, including providing the legal, housing, and financial support needed for one survivor to see her family for the first time in 4 years.
- Enrolling in school after years away, visioning and building towards the futures that they want.

Quote from one survivor served:

API Chaya connected me with attorneys to get a restraining order against my ex-husband and to file for my divorce. My advocate helped me find temporary shelter for six months and rental assistance for 8 months at my own apartment, plus food vouchers and gift cards. She always makes sure that me and my son can survive every day. **I am getting my life back again** and I don’t know what I’d do without API Chaya’s help and guidance. I hope you never get tired of helping people like me.
We want to move beyond awareness and invest in systemic change... When the law doesn’t do enough to give survivors and vulnerable people more opportunity, we have to fight for change. Working with API Chaya is providing me the space where I am able today to help support other survivors and people vulnerable to exploitation.  
—Chulita Havill
Community Organizing

API Chaya’s power building programs are nationally recognized, centering innovative and cultural practices towards a world where we all have the skills needed to intervene in harm and support survivors.

Partnered with 110+ organizations...

...to produce 480+ local events...

...reaching 12,300+ individuals.

We continued to organize in response to the needs in our communities, shifting programs to be online and remote to center accessibility. We provided WiFi hotspots, headphones, stipends, and gift cards to provide community members what they need to connect with our programs and their support networks. Knowing how critical it is to decrease isolation and practice tools to navigate conflict and support survivors, we adapted our skill building and leadership programs to be specific to COVID conditions.

Our community power-building work is grounded in our Natural Helpers program, comprised of people already in survivors’ lives, who we nurture to take action towards healing and accountability. API Chaya is particularly a leader in the non-profit anti-violence movement around our strategic priorities: (1) community-based responses to harm; (2) disability justice and access for all; and (3) creative ways to find healing from harm, with a focus on intergenerational spaces.
Some Highlights from Our Year

We offered our 3rd Annual Generations Fest, a space for people of all ages to build community power through intergenerational intimacy, centering leadership of elders and young people, providing opportunities to connect with each other, and increasing our skills and knowledge to have the relationships we want. This year we hosted bi-weekly sessions online on a variety of topics, including Land and Lineage, Access 4 All, Healing Offerings, Community-Based Solutions to Harm, and Loving on Survivors.

Alphabet Alliance of Color, a project of API Chaya’s Queer Network Program, celebrated the launch of The Alphabet Institute – a Leadership and Mentorship program for Two-Spirit, QTBIPOC in Seattle and King County!

FYREflies - our Filipina youth leadership program created Ingat kits (care in Tagalog), winter care kits to deliver to families as a way to connect with community, remind each other about the importance of wellness in our families, and show love and care at the end of a difficult year.

We expanded our Multilingual Worker outreach and leadership programs, providing know-your-rights workshops for a variety of some of the hardest to reach workers, as well as train-the-trainer sessions for people from a variety of non-English speaking communities can support each other. We all deserve to feel safe and supported at our places of work.
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

API Chaya in the News & Media

The agency’s advertising campaigns and newspaper articles reach hundreds of thousands of people in the Puget Sound region.

- KBCS Radio partnered with API Chaya to discuss community care during COVID-19.
- Panadda Mccoy’s 12 Years Ago I Was Trafficked, Now I Have Hope, published in the South Seattle Emerald.
- Priya Rai in the Building Accountable Communities video series, created in partnership with Project NIA and the Barnard Center for Women.
- Kalayo Pestano selected for the final cycle of NoVo Foundation’s Movement to End Violence leadership program.
Priority Area Highlights

1. Our Response to the Pandemic

COVID-19 rocked the entire world, and our marginalized communities were some of the most impacted. From loss of wages, to inability to stay at home due to work, to being forced to be at home with the person causing you harm, our people face enormous barriers. Many of our staff and people in our communities are chronically ill and disabled, and we hold their health and wellness as a core priority. API Chaya adapted our approach to address COVID-19 challenges while continuing our long-term goals of meeting immediate needs, creating options for survivors, and fostering safety, healing, and accountability.

We were able to:

- Invest in systems and structures that enable our communities to work-from-home, have stable internet, and continue to engage with our services.
- Advocate for massive, free COVID testing.
- Deliver groceries, PPE, gift cards, and other supplies to underserved and BIPOC families in need throughout our region.
- Deliver over 300 meals a week over the summer, when lockdown conditions were the most restrictive.
- Adapt our skill building programs to be responsive to stay-at-home orders.
- Send letters and care packages to incarcerated survivors, while advocating for their access to PPE and release of those that are high risk.
Some Highlights from Our Year

### 1. Our Response to the Pandemic

**South King County & Eastside Mutual Aid Group**

Natural Helpers and volunteers came together to form South King County & Eastside mutual aid group. We completed over 3000 requests for material support since March 2020, organized several food & clothing pantries, and offered cash support to community members. We are further working with the mutual aid team to offer emotional support for survivors who have requested mutual aid and 1:1 check-ins for emotional support.

**Wifi is a Lifeline**

Wifi is a Lifeline recognizes that students, workers, and survivors need free, safe, reliable, and immediately accessible internet access. We are working toward piloting a South King County community-owned and operated internet network that provides free internet to residents and trains them in its operation. We assert that internet access is a human right, and this campaign is building toward a future where communities can access the internet without reliance on corporations.

**Supporting Our People In The Time of COVID-19**

Monthly education and skill building workshops to cultivate leadership in all of us to intervene in and respond to harm when it happens, as well as have the loving and equitable relationships we deserve.

**Tunakupenda, Jamii**

Translating information about COVID-19 and staying safe in more than 12 languages, as well as training multilingual Natural Helpers to provide the same education in their native languages to their communities.
Priority Area Highlights

2. In Defense of Black Lives

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Seattle, and millions across the globe, as the murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Charleena Lyles and many more sparked the uprising of 2020. We all have a role to play in calling for justice and accountability, and supporting our communities in understanding the harms of the criminal legal system. This unprecedented time in the world called us to deepen the work we are already doing, and find further creative and innovative ways to lift up the power and resiliency of survivors and our communities, and move us all to take action in defense of black lives.

In part, for us that looked like:

- Mobilizing with Asian grassroots organizations in response to calls to action by Black organizers.
- Providing emotional support, consultation, and facilitation as needed to navigate harm and conflict between grassroots movement leaders.
- Helping plan and coordinate direct actions so they center safety and accessibility.
- Engaging in our own internal process of confronting our role in systems of harm, including a staff wide 3-day training on anti-blackness.
- Free monthly workshops to practice the skills needed to respond to harm outside of state systems.
- Resourcing our Natural Helpers to engage their peers and families around anti-Black racism, and towards shifting behaviors and practicing healthier cross-racial relationships in their neighborhoods.
- “Black Lives Matter for Youngsters” workshop with Muslim young people.
API Chaya is one of the leaders in the nonprofit anti-violence movement in highlighting the intersections of gender-based violence and state violence. We spent a week promoting the Survived & Punished Campaign, uplifting grassroots work to free survivors punished for navigating the conditions of violence in their lives.

Co-Authored a letter Not In Our Names, calling for Defunding Seattle Police Department, and showing the ways that will benefit survivors. It received almost 800 signatures, and we continue to advocate with our local elected officials to move away from solutions that center policing and prisons.

Monthly transformative justice skills labs, to develop leadership in responding to harm within communities. If we are going to defund police and prisons, we need to cultivate our own systems to intervene in violence that center healing and dignity.
Priority Area Highlights
3. Cultivating Healing

We leveraged our resources, practices and cultural traditions towards healing in a variety of ways:

- Increasing our therapy capacity by 50%.
- One-on-one weekly check ins with youth to maintain connection and foster belonging.
- Pacific Islander storytelling and skill sharing circles facilitated by Tongan and CHamoru staff.
- Partnering with local groups to provide drop in support circles for survivors of harm.
- Two-day healing gathering for more than 60 people that centered on survivors reclamation of body and dreams.
- Creating QTBIPOC specific spaces for grief and healing, and offering plant medicine to attendees.

COVID lockdown, massive uprisings, and total state failure to respond created some of the most difficult situations for survivors. Staying connected and feeling supported is one of the most crucial needs in preventing and intervening when harm happens. As an agency primarily composed of people who are survivors ourselves, we seek to nurture resilience, growth, and healing for all our staff and communities.

Healing makes room for us to fight in the places where it’s necessary, and love in the places we long to.

—Prentis Hemphill

Being in a space with other survivors was my biggest take away. I felt safe to show up as myself and I resonated with the experiences of others. I felt so welcomed and seen.

—API Chaya Programming Participant
People with disabilities experience some of the highest rates of violence, and are so often left out of services, and not given the resources and tools needed to access healing spaces. This year we launched our Support Circle for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Survivors of Color, and children of Deaf Adults, facilitated by our D/HoH Disability Justice Coordinator.

Our Peaceful Families Taskforce builds knowledge, skills, and leadership for Muslim community members to intervene in gender-based violence in culturally specific and faith-based ways, grounded in lesson from the Quran to mobilize people to take action. Annual groups include A New Beginning for divorced people, another version for elementary school youth, and multi-day regional Imam training in how to respond to disclosure.

The Queer Network Program throughout 2020 cultivated spaces of healing for QTBIPoC. To honor grief and loss, QNP held virtual programming from a Decolonizing Non-Violent Communication Series to Plant Medicine and Grief Spaces for Queer and Trans Black community and QTBIPoC, while partnering with local QTBIPoC Plant Medicine Makers to provide herbal care packages to attendees.

May Allah reward you for your efforts. This is an amazing group, I feel a true sisterhood here.

— Our Peaceful Families Taskforce Participant
Financial Report

Your support is what makes these critical services possible. API Chaya uses individual donations to directly support our fund for client assistance, community assistance, and our ability to maintain essential services, like our free and confidential helpline, advocacy program, and outreach efforts. It is this flexible, unrestricted money that can truly respond to the many needs of the survivors that we serve.

Revenue
- Government Grants & Contracts: $2,287,111 (61.40%)
- Foundations: $946,724 (25.30%)
- Individuals: $397,710 (11.00%)
- Corporate Contributions: $79,024 (2.00%)
- Earned Income & Other: $10,867 (0.30%)

Expenses: $3,043,703.00
API Chaya's Legacy

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SINCE AND PERSIST

1996

API Chaya—"shelter" or "shade" in Sanskrit—was established to serve South Asian women in times of crisis and need and to raise awareness of domestic violence issues.

1997

Chaya established its first Board of Directors.

1995

Susana Rementaria Blackwell and her unborn daughter Kristina, Veronica Laureta, and Phoebe Dizon were murdered at the King County Courthouse by Susana's estranged husband.

Out of concern for the prevalence of violence against women in their communities and understanding the need to work together, two groups of organizers converged as the API Women & Family Safety Center and gained sponsorship from the Washington State Commission on Asian American Affairs.

1997

The API Safety Center hired its first staff to work with community groups to organize for justice and social change.

2000

Chaya holds its first survivor support group.

2001

Chaya's Powerful Families Project was launched with a three-day conference for the Muslim community.

2001

API Safety Center publishes Its Natural Helper Community organizing model which was implemented in partnership with the Samosun Christian Congregational Church.

2002

Led by Representative Kimi W. Keating, the UW Women’s Center, and the API Safety Center, Washington State became the first state to criminalize human trafficking and offer some protections to survivors.

2006

API Safety Center partners with LGBT/Queer artists of color to create the Queer POC People of Color Liberation Project theatre series.

2007

Youth Keynote: Jhorma Bark, original work by South Asian women and survivors, presented in Seattle as a collaboration between Chaya and Sasa:Se.

2014

API Chaya hosted a groundbreaking panel to discuss violence for transformative justice and community accountability work in Seattle, integrating a perspective based on disability liberation.

2014

From BISE Showcase: A group of survivors of sexual assault and sexual violence shared their stories publicly through art.

2014

Two API Chaya youth leaders, Jhorma Williams and Etan Kim, from Youkinsho, inspired by youkinsho (YK) present at a statewide conference on their work (orally) addressing what is happening to their community later that year, Etan Kim, was lost to suicide.

2015

Involving a tragic murder and suicide, Filipino Youth Action to Eliminate Violence (FYAE) was launched in collaboration with the Filipino Community of Seattle and API Chaya.

2017

API Chaya begins its partnership with Collective Justice, including the Healing Education for Accountability and Liberation project at Monroe Correctional Complex.

2017

Alphabet Alliance of Color (AADC) launches with the Queer Network Program to organize leadership and support for LGBTQ people of color.

2015

API Chaya develops and runs a "Hands of Kingship" facilitator training course for community volunteers, amplifying faith-based violence prevention work.

2015

Human Trafficking survivor leaders receive local and national training. They begin creating programming for other survivors.

2020

API Chaya launches the Community Solutions Intensive Training and Exhibit, showcasing the skills of community members to address harm directly through community accountability.

Survivors Reclaiming Space

In a world where media holds a patent on storytelling, whose voices become louder than others? Mainstream news sources often erase us from our own survivor stories. Time and again, we are saturated with stories of the aggressor’s lives, forever changed. How do we bear survivors’ speaking power? This exhibit is a revelation of truth and building power through claiming space for our narratives.

The media coverage that followed the murders of Susana Rementaria, Phoebe Dizon, and Veronica Laureta continues centered Timothy Blackwell as the victim while portraying Susana as desexualized. This depiction of Susana framed her as a survivor to a fraudulent immigration story, subsequently implying blame for her own death.

These themes were not only prominent in the media but also emerged in the interviews of the jurors during the penalty trial. There was also excessive blame toward the lack of security at the courthouse for the murders, instead of looking at the root causes of violence and power.
WE BELIEVE SURVIVORS