



A PEN

2011

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) fights for the right of all people to live, work, learn, play and thrive in a clean, healthy, environment. APEN is organizing in low-income Asian Pacific American communities and mobilizing APA communities across California to sound the alarm about the climate crisis, what is at stake for APA communities, and how we use this as an opportunity for massive reinvestment in low-income communities of color. In particular, APEN is working at the nexus of climate policy, community and economic development, and environmental health to ensure that state and national resources are opened up for investment to develop green, healthy and just communities for those most overburdened by environmental damage and the impacts of climate change on low-income communities of color. APEN's key strategies are: base building and mobilization, waging campaigns to advance our environmental justice agenda, and building a statewide APA climate coalition and electoral infrastructure.

THE APEN 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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APEN appreciates our board members who termed out in 2011 ::
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A MESSAGE FROM APEN BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Dear Friends of APEN,

Five years ago, APEN set on a course to build power in API communities for statewide impact. We knew that we needed to push our scope beyond Richmond and Oakland to realize our vision for environmental justice. And we knew that we had the core strategies in place: direct organizing and movement building. After a string of victories in 2010, our priority in 2011 was to build on a strong organization deeply rooted in affected API communities, strategically aligned with statewide partners, and artfully skillful in local and state policy.

Foremost, members and leaders from Richmond and Oakland are prepared to lead us into the statewide arena. After months of educational sessions, leaders came together in October 2011 to vote on our first statewide campaign issue: renewable energy and jobs. Our community leaders are fundamental to the heart and success of this campaign.

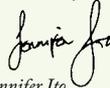
Secondly, we continue to reach out across race, geography and issues to cultivate relationships with key partners. Today, the Asian Pacific American Climate Coalition, launched in 2010, has 100 part-

ners throughout California. And to mobilize APA communities to the polls, we have been ramping up our statewide civic engagement strategy with allied organizations.

Lastly, we are standing up on important policies that affect our communities. While engaged in local campaigns, we seized an opportunity to take leadership with the California Environmental Justice Alliance in supporting legislation to bring climate fund revenues to EJ communities. Through that process, we are learning what it takes to win in Sacramento.

These – and many other – accomplishments in 2011 would not have been possible without the trust, dedication and generosity of our members, staff, allies, board and supporters. We appreciate your commitment and support through both good and difficult times. Thank you for being part of APEN.

In solidarity,



Jennifer Ito
2011 Board Chair



Roger Kim
Executive Director

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011

Grassroots Leadership: Creating Change in our Communities

Building Strong Neighborhoods: Chinatown Development

APEN believes that Oakland needs strong neighborhoods where equitable development provides investment, justice and benefits for

low-income community residents. Chinatown, home base of APEN's Oakland office and the Power in Asians Organizing (PAO) program, is a strong and vibrant community with businesses, services and cultural offerings that serve newcomers, neighborhood residents and the greater Asian Pacific Islander (API) community, despite a history of displacement and erosion of its boundaries due to urban renewal. The construction of the Lake Merritt BART Station in the mid-1960s

resulted in the displacement of 75 families, an orphanage and a church congregation from Chinatown. Today, this BART station and the Chinatown neighborhood is once again the focus of development and the outcomes are critically important, with the potential to influence development plans in other neighborhoods throughout Oakland.

As part of the Oakland Chinatown Coalition, APEN is fighting for development to pay its fair share of neighborhood benefits. After attending trainings to understand the development process, PAO members are demanding that Oakland require development to provide community benefits to support an economically diverse and inclusive Oakland!

At a recent city council hearing, PAO members testified for community benefits like affordable and family housing, support for small businesses, public open space and community centers:

Excerpt from, Hui Zhen Li's testimony, APEN member since January 2009:

I am an APEN leader and have worked with APEN and the Chinatown coalition on the Lake Merritt Development plan for last two years. I helped to collect surveys, and attended numerous workshops and other activities, to express our thoughts on how to make this area plan better and make Oakland become one of the most successful Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) cities.



REDI coalition meeting on the General Plan.

APEN organizes the community, with hundreds of members, and most of them live in the development neighborhood. A lot of leaders have been actively participating in the process. We agree that the Chinatown Coalition proposals can build a strong neighborhood and a healthy Chinatown.

However, the plan submitted by the city staff, has no viable, meaningful mechanisms that ensure mixed-income Transit-Oriented Development can occur in the Lake Merritt Development. We are so disappointed, for we have addressed this many, many times, but our voices haven't been heard obviously and city staff treats our voice like wind blowing off to their ears.

Just now, a number of our members addressed our concerns one more time, and we ask you to make sure the city staff includes policy mechanisms in the plan to ensure mixed-income TOD can occur.

We do it peacefully now, but we will resort to force to show our people



Team APEN runners at the Oakland Running Festival.

power if those mechanisms are not included next time we meet.

Richmond General Plan

In Richmond, the birthplace of APEN's first organizing project, the Laotian Organizing Project (LOP), APEN has built strong roots and worked to make the city a model of sustainable and community-oriented development and planning. Along with community allies, APEN Staff and LOP members have engaged in crafting a Richmond General Plan that includes sustainable practices in health and wellness, land use and economic development.

Over the past year, LOP members have met with decision makers at planning commission and city council meetings to ensure that the city of Richmond adopts requirements for green job creation, job training and local hire requirements for immigrants and Richmond residents. LOP members advocate for new development that includes renewable energy and current projects and infrastruc-

tures transitioning to higher energy efficiency, with jobs and particular support going to low-income families and households. APEN is also working through the General plan to better regulate polluting industries to improve community health.

2nd Annual Oakland Running Festival

For the first time ever, APEN ran for climate justice by joining the 2nd annual Oakland Running Festival. Board, staff and supporters raised over \$8,500 as Team APEN. Seventeen team members ran, jogged and walked the 13.1 mile half-marathon course and four runners competed in the relay race while APEN volunteers staffing the Mile 2 water stop cheered them to victory!

The race was a successful fundraiser, and a fun way to connect new supporters to APEN's work. APEN supporters introduced new friends and family to the environmental justice movement and it was a great

way to be immersed in the local community.

Grassroots Fundraising Academy

In 2011, APEN focused on strengthening leadership development and deepening our member engagement. One of the ways APEN accomplished this goal was through member-led grassroots fundraising efforts. APEN launched a brand new Leaders' Grassroots Fundraising Committee and Training Academy. Members from both PAO and the LOP participated in the committee, attending a series of trainings. Committee members also learned from organizers and members of other base-building organizations about successful fundraising strategies.

Leader engagement in fundraising marks a huge shift in APEN's grassroots fundraising culture—one that APEN members are committed to and excited by. Members are enthusiastic about taking ownership and participating in grassroots fundraising to invest in APEN and help



APACC member, Dana Parades, participates in the Annual Leaders Retreat.

sustain the work that we do. 2011 was a year to build the foundation for deeper membership fundraising engagement at APEN for years to come!

Leaders' Retreat: Green Jobs for our Communities!

In October, APEN completed a historic campaign issue development process to choose our new statewide campaign. For over six months, APEN staff and leaders engaged in political education and strategy discussions around critical climate justice issues facing our communities.

The extensive process culminated on October 16 at our annual Leaders Retreat attended by over 65 leaders, staff, and four of APEN's Asian Pacific American Climate Coalition (APACC) representatives. This was the first time we had state coalition members join our Richmond and Oakland membership in the same space, helping inform decisions on APEN's strategic direction. At end of the day-long retreat, full of political education, break out discussions and debates, APEN staff and members voted to work on a campaign to advance community scale renewable energy that creates green sustainable jobs in low-income immigrant communities in Richmond, Oakland and throughout California.

APEN members selected this campaign to shape the development of the renewable energy economy on

the ground floor. Our members want to ensure that Asian immigrants and refugees have access to jobs opportunities, economic development benefits, and help create a more democratic and sustainable energy future. Building a renewable energy economy for all is vital to the sustainability of our environment and communities. Taking on this campaign, APEN will continue to show leadership on key issues like climate change and the economic crisis in California!

API's and Climate Change

The Changing Face of Environmentalism

In 2011, several stories recognized what APEN has known for years— API communities are some of California's strongest environmentalists.

A survey released in August by the Public Policy Institute of California reported that communities of color in California strongly support environmental regulation. Fifty-two percent of Asian Americans polled

were “very concerned” with climate change and fifty-three percent want immediate action from the state of California to reduce greenhouse gases.

Also showcasing the commitment of immigrants and other communities of color to environmental sustainability and climate justice, a recent 9-minute documentary, *Where We Live: Changing Face of Environmentalism*, highlights how grassroots organizing and coalition work defeated Proposition 23, “the Dirty Energy Proposition.” Produced by award-winning local director, Mark Decena, the film shows how community groups were crucial in turning out immigrants and communities of color to defeat the bill. Watch the video at <http://vimeo.com/32174618>. It shows that when community organizations engage in grassroots organizing and coalition building they can truly be an unstoppable force for change!

SB 535 Community Benefits Fund

As part of our growing statewide work, APEN led the California Environmental Justice Alliance's (CEJA) work on SB 535, the Healthy Neighborhoods Fund (formerly AB 1405). SB 535, of which CEJA is a co-sponsor, would direct funding toward a Community Benefits Fund for projects related to carbon reduction and mitigation of climate change impacts in the most vulnerable communities – low-income



Members of the CEJA SB 535 team at the state capitol.



The APIs and Climate Change Conference in LA.

communities of color. In 2010, the bill reached Schwarzenegger's desk but was vetoed. This year, the bill was reintroduced on the senate side as SB535 and is now a 2-year bill. APEN staff is proud to provide leadership in moving the bill and organizing support with our APACC allies.

National API Organizing Retreat

On August 4, 2011, forty organizers and community leaders from grassroots community-based API organizations from across the country came together in Los Angeles to share strategies, workshop challenges, break bread and build community. For three days, participants talked openly about their organizational challenges and aspirations, supported each others' vulnerabilities and applauded each other's victories. APEN helped convene this historical gathering along with our allies: Chinese Progressive Association - SF, CAAAV: Organiz-

ing Asian Communities, CPA-Boston and CPA-San Gabriel Valley.

APIs & Climate Change Conference

We are extremely proud to see how our statewide organizing efforts have blossomed in the last year— APACC now includes over 100 membership organizations throughout the state. In September, APEN co-sponsored an APIs and Climate Change conference in LA. Attended by 100 API leaders, the conference was convened by the APA EJ Taskforce, a combination of APACC-LA & Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council members. Senator Kevin de Leon, author of SB 535 Community Benefits Fund, gave the key note address. Leaders had the opportunity to discuss connections between climate change and community issues of health, policy, green jobs and the arts.

Laotian Daughters: Working toward Community, Belonging, and Environmental Justice

This new book, released in December of 2011, tells the story of the young women who participated in Asian Youth Advocates (AYA), a former APEN program in Richmond, California. By documenting the AYA program, Bindi Shah's *Laotian Daughters* shows how young people can create real change in their communities and the lasting connections APEN has built in 18 years of work!

18 YEARS OF MOVEMENT BUILDING

Introducing APEN Action: Building API Voting Power

APEN will continue building power in the electoral arena by launching our new 501(c)(4), APEN Action! Building on our work and successful track record of mobilizing API voters throughout California, our new electoral program will be an important force in building progressive API voting power in the state to help pass environmentally sustainable legislation that will benefit our communities and the future of our state.

#Occupy Climate Justice

In the fall of 2011, the spirit of protest caught fire as Occupy encampments sprung up across the country. Inspired by the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, protesters started camping out first at Wall Street and then occupying financial districts and city centers in many other cities to protest economic injustice. APEN staff and members participated in the Occupy movement in both Oakland and Richmond. Staff and leaders engaged in political education around climate





APEN staff mobilizes to support the Oakland encampment.

justice and economic inequality, and turned out to many Occupy events and marches.

In particular, the APEN community was highly visible in our bright APEN t-shirts at the Oakland General Strike on November 2, 2011. In the first Oakland General Strike since the 1946, APEN joined thousands of other local residents to take part in marches and actions all day long that shut down the 1% including several banks and the Oakland port. PAO and LOP members shared their stories of economic hardship and why they are fighting for economic justice. One LOP leader, Koy Seng Saechao, wrote about struggling to make ends meet as her fixed income has been reduced continually. For members like Koy Seng, who have been fighting for environmental health and justice in Richmond for years, it was inspirational to be part of such a large and visible movement.

Since our founding, APEN has been deeply rooted in organizing as part of the 99%. The Occupy movement has helped put a spotlight on the issues of economic inequality that APEN and our allies have long championed. In this historic moment, APEN showed important leadership from protesting the removal of the encampments to helping envision and build the ongoing 99% movement beyond the tents. APEN played a key role in representing the concerns of API communities and the importance of environmental justice and a green economy.

18th Anniversary Event: Going to the Polls in Style

On November 17, APEN celebrated our 18th Anniversary with a lovely and lively event at the Oakland Scottish Rite Center by Lake Merritt. Over 350 APEN members, staff, board, supporters, friends and allies joined APEN in celebration.



Community members, supporters, and allies celebrate 18 years of APEN.

To recognize APEN's growing civic engagement work, our theme was "going to the polls in style."

There were many wonderful moments throughout the evening, which highlighted APEN's victories over the years and our direction in the future. APEN's talented leaders helped plan the event and provide entertainment. PAO leader Chang

Han played the violin and LOP leader Lipo Chanthanasack led LOP in a Laotian drumming performance. Members of both organizations helped staff present APEN's 18-year timeline.

APEN was proud to honor the work of the National Domestic Workers Alliance and the California Domestic Workers Coalition. It was incredibly motivating to hear the stories of courageous nannies, housekeepers, and caregivers building a social movement for workers' rights. Presentations from keynote speaker Ai-jen Poo of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, as well as Maria Distancia from the California Domestic Workers Coalition were inspirational reminders of the power of broad coalition building and the tremendous successes workers and community members can achieve. APEN will continue to support their groundbreaking campaigns.



Torm Normprasurt and LOP Member Lipo Chanthanasack lead closing chant in Laotian.

Ten Reasons We Love APEN (Excerpt from Ai-jen Poo's keynote address):

1. We love you because of your deep roots and **unwavering commitment to organizing in Asian communities**. First of all, organizing is hard - PERIOD. Anyone who has ever organized in the Asian community, and particularly with a pan-Asian framework, knows that it is hard. And in the Asian community there are particular histories and challenges. You have built a powerful voice for our community regionally and nationally. Thank you, you make me proud to be Asian!
2. We love you because you are an organization that has supported some of the most important **women leaders** in the social justice movement. Something about APEN makes it a place **where women leaders can grow** and are supported to lead in powerful ways. That is so precious in our movement.
3. We love you because some of our **nation's best leaders and organizers** have been trained at APEN, in your campaigns, in building this organization. The organizing, advocacy and coalition building practice of your organization has helped develop several generations of Asian organizers for social and environmental justice. It's a tremendous contribution.
4. We love APEN because as you stay rooted in issues of environmental justice, you realize that your leadership is needed for the social justice movement as a whole and your work has **always connected deeply** with other movements and issues – health, racial justice, economic justice, just to name a few.
5. We love APEN because not only has APEN done groundbreaking work organizing in the Asian community, but you have built **powerful multi-racial alliances and coalitions**, to help build the power and voice of people of color and the environmental justice movement as a whole.
6. We love APEN because of the **real victories** you have won for our communities. As organizers we have a responsibility to make life better for our communities, to bring dignity and a dignified quality of life for our families and neighbors. Your campaigns over the last 18 years have won countless changes in the lives of thousands of people. Thank you for making life better for our communities.
7. We love APEN for your **big dreams**. As organizers we also have a responsibility to imagine and craft a vision for the future of our communities. The solutions and the vision we offer must both match the depth of



Honoring members of the National Domestic Workers Alliance and California Domestic Workers Coalition.

our current problems and the breadth of our communities' hopes and dreams. Our visions must tap into the deepest place of hope and commitment so that we can truly match what we're up against. APEN has that ambition, to change the world for people and the planet. APEN has big dreams.

8. We love APEN for your work on the **CA Domestic Workers Bill of Rights**. Your staff and your leaders have been with us throughout the campaign. We are so fortunate to have been able to learn from your experience and your wisdom. We have counted on your guidance and your support. As isolated as domestic workers are in the workplace, we have never felt alone in our fight for dignity. Thank you for standing with us.
9. We love APEN for **helping to protect the environment for our children and their**

children. We are in the fight of our lives for the soul of the country, and for the future of the planet. We need you, your leadership, your voice and your work now more than ever. We're so grateful for your campaigns to protect our communities and our environment from destruction, corporate greed and racism. We thank you for your campaigns on behalf of the 99% for the 100%.

10. **I love APEN** because as an Asian activist, there is no greater source of strength and inspiration than knowing that there is an organization out there that is building upon our legacy of organizing in the Asian community and writing new pages of that history for our children and our children's children – the Asian activists of the future - so that **they can take pride in our legacy**, what we've done as a community for the country and the planet.

APEN HAPPENINGS

2011 has been an exciting and tumultuous year for our APEN family. We just wanted to let you know about the big changes for our team over the past year.

APEN Honored

APEN was honored with 2 awards over the summer of 2011. Filipino Advocates for Justice celebrated their 38th Anniversary and honored APEN for its role in building the environmental justice movement. Ella Baker Center celebrated its 15th Anniversary and honored APEN with its Ella Award for its inspiring and groundbreaking achievements!

Board News

This year we were excited to welcome **Joanne Kim**, who comes with great experience in her work

at the Community Coalition, onto our board. However, we were sorry to say goodbye to Board President **Jennifer Ito** who served the APEN board with strategic insights and incredible commitment for 3 terms. **Michael Leon Guerrero** has also stepped down from his post as an APEN Board member this past year but we look forward to continuing to learn from his vision and leadership as this broader fight for justice only grows.

Over the summer, Amado Uno and Mario Lugay hosted a very successful fundraising house party in DC, our first big East Coast fundraiser. The event was not only a great fundraiser, but a fun way to bring together over 50 APEN supporters on the other side of the country. We hope to keep bringing support for Environmental Justice from all over.



APEN staff at the 18th Anniversary Event.

Staff News

We are happy to welcome our new Development Associate, **Megan Zapanta**, who is joining us from San Diego. We are also lucky to have **Tiffany Yip** and **Sammy Huang**, who volunteered with APEN as Alameda High School students over the past few years, start working as our PAO organizing assistants after graduating. Our Associate Director, **Miya Yoshitani**, has transitioned from several years of development work to overseeing program and organizing.

Meanwhile, several members of the APEN team have transitioned to other exciting endeavors. After six years as APEN's Program Director, **Mimi Ho** left APEN in June, **Rachel Vernon**, our Development Associate, also left to attend graduate school in Colorado, and Chinatown Organizer, **Wayne Leung** transitioned from APEN in August. We also have had to say goodbye to part-time Chinatown Organizer,

Yik Fai Tam, who left to pursue a teaching position in Hong Kong. And at the end of January 2012, we will say goodbye to **Torm Normprasurt** who has helped to nurture APEN's growth the past 16 years.

In Memoriam:

On August 3rd 2011, Naima Kali Liu-Fernandez, the daughter of Rona Fernandez (APEN board member) and Henry Liu, passed away in her sleep from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Naima was four and a half months old. She was a beautiful, observant, happy and healthy child, and was well-loved by her parents and everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.



Goodbye from Torm:

Dear APEN friends, colleagues, and supporters:

After 16 amazing years at APEN, I am both sad and happy to announce my transition out as a staff team member as of February 2012. It's a hard thing for me to say goodbye to APEN staff, but I feel this is the right time. APEN is following its dream of building deep roots in Richmond and Oakland, and branching out through California. I have grown and learned a lot through my 16 years with APEN. It has been both a privilege and pleasure to work with everyone and to share in the efforts passionately to meet the mission and goals of APEN. I want to thank everyone for making me a stronger and better person. My heart is full of your friendship & wisdom.

I've been dreaming to bring Economic Justice to the Laotian community through creating and sustaining small businesses. I hope to bring my dream of providing small business advocacy and supportive services to the Laotian community. I hope we'll meet again soon, and continue working together as I build my business.

*Sincerely yours,
Torm Nompraseurt*

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THANK YOU

We are grateful for the broad community support we receive for APEN's work. Many thanks to our generous donors!

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