

Overview

CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities is a pan-Asian community-based organization that has worked to build the power of low-income Asian immigrants and refugees in New York City since 1986.



Constituency

- Asian & Pacific Islanders
- Ages 15-65+
- LGBTQ
- Immigrants
- Undocumented Populations

Mission

“Through our organizing model of base-building, leadership development, campaigns, alliances, and organizational development we organize Asian communities to fight for institutional change and participate in a broader movement towards racial, gender, and economic justice.” – CAAAV website

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in New York

Gentrification and Forced Displacement

Low-income/working class Asian immigrants are being pushed from rent-stabilized and public housing.

Housing is Unhealthy or in Disrepair

Families’ exposure to mold and lead—over 3,000x the legal limit; rodent infestation. Fifty-eight percent of renter-occupied homes in the Lower East Side and Chinatown had at least one maintenance defect such as water leaks, inadequate heating, peeling paint, etc.¹

Predatory Landlord Tactics

Including harassment, unfounded lawsuits, massive/fake construction projects, lack of repairs/renovations, etc., resulting in the residents’ health and suffering. *“They [residents] are missing days of work to go to court to fight their landlords. They are missing their pay. They are using their own money to make the repairs when they should be using it on their own families, their kids’ education, and food for their families. We see the force out and displacement impacts on their health and mental health in so many different ways.”* – Cathy Dang, Executive Director

Decreased Sense of Community

A shift in culture from community to profit-driven, and the loss of social safety nets (e.g., child care centers, youth centers, doctors, affordable fresh food markets and restaurants, etc.) *“When we don’t have stability in the community, [we] lose this tight-network sense of community. It creates hardship for the families for the children ages zero to five. We have had one instance, where one of the landlords bought-out this building and displaced a daycare center that had 15 more years on their lease [to build a luxury condo].”*

Lack of Affordable Childcare

Particularly for low-income and working class families. *“There’s a slow-growing movement of cooperatives...where people are taking care of each other’s children and are paid and compensated for. There [are] actually a lot of day care centers in Chinatown...Our tenants don’t actually rely on [them] because they can’t afford it. People who use the daycare centers in Chinatown work in the financial district. They drop off their children and go to work. For our tenants, they generally just rely on each other.”*



Community Defined “Best Practices” to Improve Childhood Health

- **Follows a Theory of Change (TOC) that Is Community-Driven, Relational, Healing, Empowering and Building A Movement Social Change**—the components of their TOC include: direct service links, base building, leadership development, policy campaigns, strategic alliances, and organizational development.

“We organize tenants to develop their leadership so they are able to understand their own agency to push for change. When they push for systemic [change] we [also] build unity with other communities. Whether we are working with other groups who work with the homeless around housing or policing... we are connecting tenants together to see their power together. We do political education to help them understand why they are living through what they are living through beyond their individual landlord [systems and policies]. We do office hours for a couple hours a week because we do see that as important piece to building relationships with the tenants...I think it helps ease their mental wellness. To have a clear plan of what they’re able to control and influence change.”

- **Youth-Led Multigenerational and Intergenerational Organizing for Justice**— multiple age groups are represented (multigenerational) and the work transfers across/between generations (intergenerational).

“CAAAV’s always been an intergenerational and multigenerational space...The youth always has been on the forefront leading the work with us and has been really critical to being the interpreters between the tenants and the system. So it dates back to when during Giuliani’s years there was a huge push out of street vendors in Chinatown. It was the youth who came together to help the street vendors understand what was going on, and what the city was doing and why the city was doing it...And now, the youth are there to support our tenants around anti-displacement...and the older tenants feel inspired by young people in the room. That’s what we keep hearing. That they have energy and hope, [youth] haven’t been bogged down the same way tenants have been.”

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in New York

26%

of API children (age 4) were found to be overweight or obese & 13% were **obese**.²

8.4%

of all births were pre-term in the Lower East Side and Chinatown.¹



API child blood lead levels increased from 11% in 2010 to 26% in 2012.³

6%

of API women receive late or no prenatal care.⁴



Approximately 30% of APIs live in over-crowded or dense households.⁵



Stroke and high blood pressure are more common causes of death among every API subgroup in comparison to Whites.⁶

Allies/Partnerships Working on Children’s Health

- Community Voices Heard – New York, NY www.cvhaction.org
- Families United for Racial and Economic Equality – New York, NY www.furee.org/
- Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement – New York, NY www.riissettlement.org
- Providence Youth Student Movement – Providence, RI www.prysm.org

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

- **Service Referrals and Linkages**—connecting families with immediate needs to services (e.g., health clinics, immigration, housing, English or literacy classes), as well as holding monthly legal clinics (one-on-one consultations with attorneys)
- **Anti-Displacement and Neighborhood Preservation**—fighting back against predatory landlords and over-development by regulating landlords and land use/zoning to preserve and create affordable housing for low-income/working class residents including protections for local businesses and services
- **Healthy Housing**—issue development and tenant education around mold and lead in housing, including advocating for basic services and repairs to address health/safety issues
- **Youth Leadership Development**—Asian Youth in Action (AYA) holds an 8-week Gender Justice Summer program for Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian women, trans, and gender nonconforming (TGNC) youth ages 14-20

CAAAV Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- **Access to Affordable Food (including protection of the local economy)**—youth successfully organized to prevent displacement of low-income street vendors in Chinatown and protect their rights
- **Housing Justice**—Using a coalition strategy, won historic resident protections from weighty rent increases for three years in a row (2014-2016), a huge victory for over 1 million NYC residents; using a multi-building organizing strategy, won a successful lawsuit with a larger scale landlord (Marolda Properties) who owns 10 buildings in Chinatown, and were able to preserve rent-stabilized housing and eliminating predatory landlord practices; reformed NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) policies to ensure immigrant and family access to housing services and repairs by integrating Mandarin/Cantonese into their city-wide call center



Website: <http://caaav.org>

Address: 55 Hester Street, Storefront,
New York, NY 10002

Telephone: 212.473.6485

Email: justice@caaav.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CAAAVnyc>

Twitter: @caaav

Tumblr: caaav.tumblr.com



LMU|LA
Psychology Applied
Research Center

Loyola Marymount University

1. King L., Hinterland K., Dragan K.L., Driver C.R., Harris T.G., Gwynn R.C., ... & Bassett M.T. (2015). Community Health Profiles 2015, Manhattan Community District 3: Lower East Side and Chinatown, 3(59):1-16.
2. Jain, A., Mitchell, S., Chirumamilla, R., Zhang, J., Horn, I.B., Lewin, A., & Huang, Z.J. (2012). Prevalence of obesity among young Asian American children. *Childhood Obesity*, 8(6), 518-525.
3. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. (2014). Lead Poisoning in New York City, Continued Decline in 2012.
4. Databank Indicator: Late or no Prenatal Care. Retrieved from <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/late-or-no-prenatal-care/>
5. Burr, J.A. and Mutchler, J.E. (2012). Housing Characteristics of Older Asian Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 27(3), 217-237. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10823-012-9173-2>
6. CardioSmart, American College of Cardiology. (2014, December 8). Asian Americans Face Greater Risk for Stroke and Hypertension. Retrieved from <https://www.cardiosmart.org/news-and-events/2014/12/asian-americans-face-greater-risk-for-stroke-and-hypertension>