

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

A SALUTE TO PARTNERS SERVING THIS COMMUNITY

During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month we celebrate those community partners who are serving this population. Song Xiong-Buck is the Director of Older Adults at the Milwaukee Christian Center (MCC) in Milwaukee. One of the pillars of the program is focused on giving older adults opportunities to remain healthy, in their homes, and an opportunity for social engagement within their local community. They serve all populations including many from the Hmong, Laotian and Burmese communities. Song's motto is, "we should all do what we can to ensure that the 'golden years' of our older adults TRULY shine!"

Focus on Healthy Eating and Socialization

The MCC serves more than 1,600 older adults each month through their meal program in Milwaukee County. In addition, they work with local restaurants in the county to offer older adults a complimentary lunch once a week. They also offer a nutritional component at 14 sites throughout the county, with a focus on healthy eating and establishing a healthy lifestyle.

"Access to HEALTHY food is a big challenge," said Song. "Many seniors do not receive Food-Share benefits (government support that helps people with limited money buy food for good health) and even if they do, it can be as little as \$23.00 a month. They are coming to us for a warm meal each day and to get access to healthy food options."

The MCC also fosters socialization in older adults. "We have an emphasis on social engagement and intentional activities where they build relationships," Song said. "Our participants are sharing their culture with one another - whether arts and crafts or exercise - they are engaging. We are building bridges between cultures because everyone here is your neighbor."

Eating a heart-healthy diet benefits both the body and the brain. The Alzheimer's Association supports a diet that focuses on foods that are less processed and lower in fat, along with more vegetables and leaner meats and proteins. These diets may also be able to reduce the risk of cognitive decline. As one in three seniors dies with Alzheimer's or other dementia, we salute the efforts of the MCC to provide healthy options for older adults.



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