A young mother and new immigrant to the United States was alarmed. Her 2-year-old son was not yet speaking. Luckily, her pediatrician referred her to early intervention services, which connected her with a bilingual
Mandarin/English-speaking speech-language pathologist.

This SLP also belonged to ASHA’s Asian Pacific Islander Speech-Language-Hearing Caucus (API Caucus). She worked with this child for a year, taking care to integrate and adapt treatment activities to the routines and language practices of the family. As the child made gains, the SLP also interpreted, translated and facilitated on behalf of the client’s family and educational team during the boy’s transition to preschool. Later, our colleague volunteered to advocate for this family during a housing crisis.

Volunteering to serve clients above and beyond professional duties is often the norm for members of the API Caucus.

What exactly is the API Caucus?

The term Asian and Pacific Islanders includes all people of Asian (East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian), American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander heritage.

The field of speech-language pathology was once unknown to most people in the API communities. In 1985, Dr. Lilly Li-Rong Cheng led a small group of ASHA-certified API professionals to hold the first meeting of the API caucus at the ASHA National Office, and we have been meeting ever since.

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Message from API Caucus Founder Dr. Lilly Li-Rong Cheng

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We are just one of six multicultural constituency groups, which you can learn more about in this series:

**Helping You Serve Spanish-Speaking Children and Adults—Your ASHA Hispanic Caucus**

**Get to Know Your Asian Indian Caucus**

Our mission is to make connections, share common concerns, educate, mentor and advocate for quality speech language and hearing services for API communities.

**How can you get involved with the API Caucus?**

We offer free membership to all students and professionals with an interest in promoting speech, language or hearing health in API communities, regardless of background.

- Visit the API Caucus website at apislhc.com.
- Join our vibrant API Caucus Facebook Group.
- View the API Caucus Youtube channel.
- Email us at api.caucus@gmail.com.

The API Caucus aims to address the disparity between the number of speech-language-hearing professionals relevant cultural/linguistic knowledge and those in the API communities who need their services. For example people of API descent represent 22 million of our country’s population, but only 5,575 of ASHA members—a 1:4,000 ratio.

The API Caucus is collaborating with the Asian Indian Caucus to conduct an online survey of API students and professionals in the speech-language-hearing sciences. We hope to use results of this survey to better inform recruitment and retention of API professionals.

Help us spread the word by taking the short survey today!

Our other ongoing efforts include:

- Providing referrals for audiologists and SLPs with particular cultural/linguistic expertise.
- Gathering relevant resources, information, research and materials for members to easily access.
- Creating connections among colleagues with shared interests in serving the API community.
- Fundraising to generate scholarships and grants for API Caucus members to enhance their skills.
The API Caucus continually strives to better serve you and our diverse communities. Join us and let us know how we can help!

Editor’s note: This is the second installment in a series covering all six of ASHA’s Multicultural Constituency Groups.

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2 COMMENTS

BARBARA HODSON

January 16, 2018 - 10:23 pm

Excellent blog!!! Please continue reporting on these multicultural activities!
Barbara Hodson

LINDA I. ROSA-LUGO

January 17, 2018 - 2:36 pm

I am excited about the collaborations that are taking place to address some important issues (e.g. service delivery; recruitment/retention of API professionals). The Hispanic Caucus supports your efforts.

Really informative blog.

Comments are closed.
language pathology, and features posts and news stories from a variety of authors, including communication sciences and disorders (CSD) professionals and ASHA staff. All content written by ASHA members reflect their own experiences, thoughts and opinions, and publication does not imply ASHA’s endorsement of the products or services they may write about.

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