



# ASIAN PRISONER SUPPORT COMMITTEE YEAR-END REVIEW

## ABOUT US

Asian Prisoner Support Committee is a grassroots organization that was founded in 2002 and based out of Oakland, California. Since its founding, APSC has led programs in prisons, organized anti-deportation campaigns, provided resources to “lifers,” and developed culturally relevant reentry programs. APSC grew out of the campaign to support the “San Quentin 3”—Eddy Zheng, Viet Mike Ngo, and Rico Riemedio. The San Quentin 3 advocated for Ethnic Studies at San Quentin and in retaliation by the prison administration—were sent to solitary confinement and transferred to different prisons. After spending months in solitary confinement (up to 11 months), Eddy, Mike, and Rico were released, and eventually, all received parole (Eddy 2005, Rico 2007, Mike 2011).

For over a decade, APSC operated as an all-volunteer organization. In 2017, APSC hired its first paid staff employees and opened an office space in Oakland Chinatown. **Today, APSC facilitates Ethnic Studies programs in prisons, provides community-based reentry services, and organizes deportation defense campaigns.**

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC) is to provide direct support to Asian and Pacific Islander (API) prisoners and to raise awareness about the growing number of APIs being imprisoned, detained, and deported.



## ADVOCACY

APSC's advocacy work focused on **ending double punishment and stopping ICE transfers of criminalized immigrants and refugees**

- **APSC is a proud co-sponsor of the VISION Act.** The VISION Act (AB 937-Carrillo): The VISION Act, authored by Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo, was introduced in the California state 2021 legislative session. The VISION Act passed the Assembly and *narrowly failed* by three votes on the Senate Floor in the 2022 legislative session. The VISION Act would protect community members who have already been deemed eligible for release from being transferred by local jails and our state prison system to immigration detention. The VISION Act takes urgent and necessary strides toward ensuring that our local and state tax dollars are not used to funnel immigrants into dangerous health conditions in immigration detention, violate Constitutional protections, and separate immigrant families and communities

- **In a rare victory**, APSC successfully supported Vithea Yung and his family in stopping his ICE Transfer after his release from prison. Vithea is a disabled Cambodian refugee who served over 25 years as a juvenile lifer. Vithea's campaign was part of a more significant movement against the practice of ICE transfers in CDCR. Vithea's experience and story share with us that ICE transfers are disability justice issues. This year, Vithea was released from CDCR in time to celebrate his first birthday and the Cambodian New Year with his family. [Read more here](#)



Caption: Vithea Yung is welcomed home on his first day of freedom by family, friends, and community members







Caption: Yeng Lee (second to the left) is welcomed home by his brother and peers.

- APSC ROOTS Alum Yeng Lee** was also slated to be transferred to ICE after completing his sentence at San Quentin State Prison in July 2022. With community support, Yeng was able to be reunited with his family. Yeng Lee is a Hmong refugee who was wrongfully sentenced to Life without parole (LWOP) for a crime he did not commit. In May 2022, Yeng was exonerated of his convictions and ordered released by a judge. On the day of his release, CDCR refused to parole him because of a clerical error. With community pressure, Yeng was able to be safely released to his family and community 5 days later.

- Launched #APSC4:** *More than half of APSC’s staff is formerly incarcerated and about 40% of our staff members identify with being formerly incarcerated and an immigrant.* While we’re incredibly proud of the leadership and work of our team, members of our staff still live in fear of being separated from their families by deportation. Chanthon Bun, Nghiep “Ke” Lam, Maria Legarda, and Borey “Peejay” Ai are formerly incarcerated immigrant leaders at APSC. Since they’ve been home, they have all dedicated their lives to serving their community with the values of healing and justice. Despite their transformational work, they are at risk of being torn from their families and community. The only way to protect them is to urge Governor Gavin Newsom to grant them pardons!



Caption: The APSC 4 from left to right: Maria, Peejay, Ke, and Bun

“We came to this country with a lot of trauma from genocide, then from living in poverty, living in a country that you don’t understand anything about and living with parents that are traumatized...A lot of us were incarcerated as children. We went through a lot of life lessons and we have changed. We’re not kids no more and we’re not the crimes that we’ve done.”

**-Chanthon Bun**  
APSC Reentry Coordinator

## ROOTS TO REENTRY

- The R2R team has supported more than 20 formerly incarcerated people access housing resources. This includes helping clients communicate with housing agencies and gain access to housing. The R2R team has spent hundreds of hours providing mentorship that has taught community members harm de-escalation, contributed to family reunification, and supported better health habits. The R2R team has also supported clients in navigating the bureaucracy of the work permit process, and are proud to have supported the completion of over 30 work permits. Additionally, the R2R team has supported 6 clients in obtaining mental health services.

### REENTRY SUPPORT BY THE NUMBERS



#### Supporting Mass Labor

- **24** APSC clients found employment through our programing
- Supported **30+** individuals apply for work permits



#### Peer Support & Reentry Navigation

- **85** individuals were provided one-on-one peer mentorship
- **16** clients successfully completed their AB109 case plan goals
- **18** clients enrolled in the Family Reunification Housing Stipends (FRHS) program
- **32** clients learned harm reduction skills to prevent relapsing



#### Supporting Mass Education

- Assisted **10** clients in enrolling in higher education programs



#### Access to Healthcare & Mental Health Services

- Supported **10** clients gain access to mental health services



#### Building Community and Networking

- Over **40+** formerly incarcerated community members actively participate in community immersion events

- **The Community and Reentry Empowerment (CARE)** for Formerly Incarcerated Women and Transgender People Support Group, launched in July of 2022, is a program designed for women and Transgender people to build and foster relationships and provide leadership opportunities for the group. Nineteen participants from across California attended virtual monthly meetings to share personal insights since returning home and provided guidance and resources for reentry needs. Outside of meetings, some participants attended social gathering events, such as movie day and APSC Community BBQ. In December of 2022, in recognition of participants' growth and commitment to the program, APSC held an in-person special graduation ceremony for participants and their loved ones in San Simeon, California, with a total of 24 attendees.



Caption: CARE program participants settle in for a weekend retreat and graduation



Caption: CARE program participants featuring their families at the beach in San Simeon

"The CARE Support Group graduation was a milestone, a reminder for me that the bond I formed with my prison family, and the gift of family I shared with them is still alive and it never faded. The laughter and the tears that filled up the room was surreal, and at the same time, a very familiar, comforting feeling. The reunion solidified that we needed this space and stay connected. We are at our best when amongst each other. Being free and free among us without judgment is the ultimate gift."

**-Maria Legarda**  
APSC Reentry Consultant

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

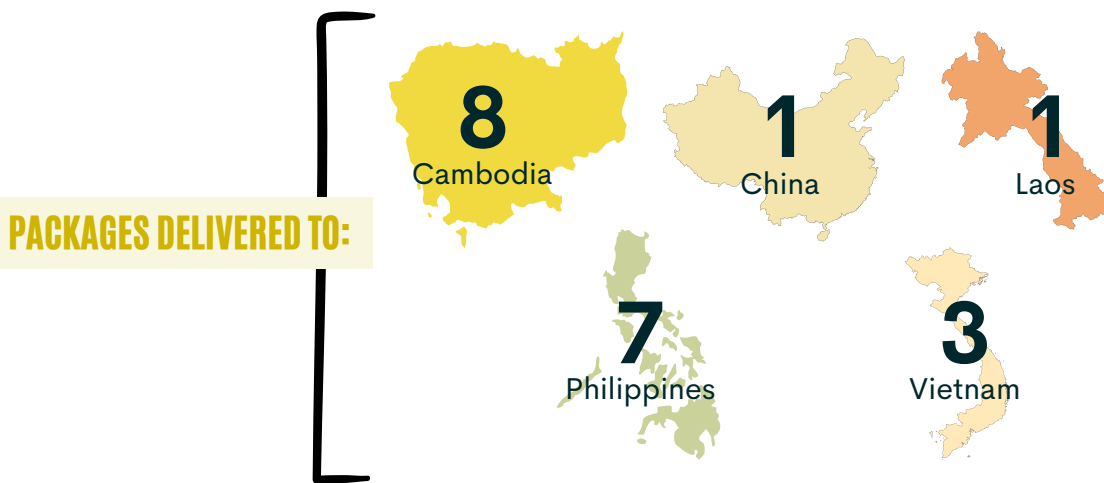
### Formerly Incarcerated Internship Program

- In 2022, APSC successfully completed two cohorts of APSC's formerly incarcerated internship program. APSC graduated seven interns which includes an out-of-state intern from Chicago, Illinois and an international intern from the Philippines. Each of our interns successfully completed their projects, which includes:

1. Publishing two issues of newsletters to be distributed to all of our API incarcerated folks throughout California
2. Expanded our survey data project to reflect the experiences of incarcerated and formerly Pacific Islanders communities.
3. Supported our correspondence and mail team in managing our growing listservs and editing our resource documents.
4. Completing a documentary documenting life as a deportee in the Philippines

### Care packages to deported community members

- In 2022, APSC launched a care package program and delivered care packages to five different countries, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and the Philippines. Since our initial launch in the first half of the year, APSC has now completed two cycles of care packages. Care packages included items people did not have access to. **This year APSC was able to provide 5 laptops to care package recipients.**







Caption: Ke Lam, APSC Facilities Manager and Reentry Coordinator helps prep care packages for deported community members



Caption: APSC staff heading to the post office to deliver care packages

## Building new partnerships

- This year APSC established a relationship with EveryOneOn to provide laptops and technical training to support formerly incarcerated reentry individuals. This ongoing partnership aims to provide nine individuals with laptops and tech training.
- In the month of November APSC partnered with Adobe to write 500 holiday cards where 41 Adobe employees participated, which would provide \$5,000 in additional funding for APSC's work.

## Anthology

- This year, APSC was able to determine that it would be best for our Anthology to be self-published. APSC is ongoing in completing the manuscript, final graphic arts, and a study guide to accompany this anthology publication.

"After experiencing decades of violence in interpersonal relationships, prison, and ICE detention, I'm grateful that I've survived these traumas—but knowing that many others have not is heartbreaking. It's also heartbreaking to know that so many Southeast Asian refugees have been exiled to countries where they have no family or community ties. Seeing the irreparable harm that incarceration and deportation causes people fuels me, along with many other freedom fighters, to continue the movement to liberate community members and reunite them with their families."

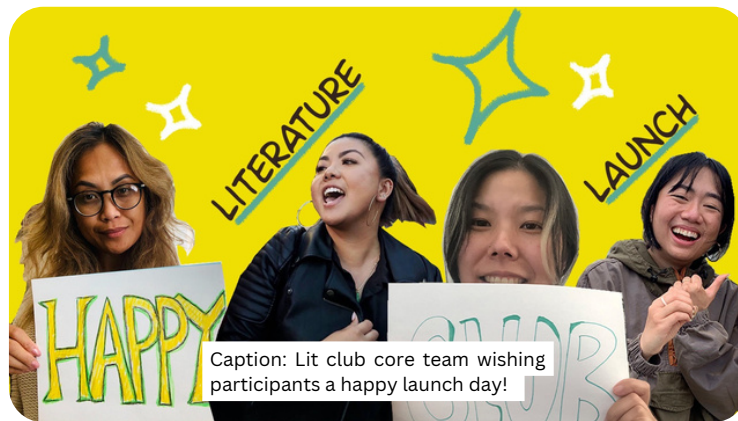
-Ny Nourn, *From Surviving Systemic Violence to Liberating People from Prisons and ICE Detention*



## IN PRISON PROGRAMING

### Ethnic Studies through literature

- **APSC Literature Club launched our second cohort of participants.** Literature Club was developed during the pandemic as a remote Ethnic studies program. The mission of the Literature club is to build community relationships between folks inside and outside of prisons. Through studying our history, facilitating book readings, and letter-writing, we hope to expand collective healing for our communities. This year's cohort consists of 12 inside members and 12 volunteers.



Caption: Lit club core team wishing participants a happy launch day!

### Mail & correspondence

- APSC successfully co-hosted four postcard writing events this year, where over 65 volunteers came together to write uplifting messages to incarcerated community members. Our events were possible thanks to the support of Adobe and API Rise, a community reentry organization in Los Angeles. **In total, we mailed more than 1,800 postcards.**
- **This year, APSC has written 70 support letters that advocate for incarcerated community members inside.** We've written support letters to support the board of parole hearings, prevent ICE transfers and deportations, and advocate for reduced sentences.
- With the support of APSC's interns and contributions from our community, APSC has created and mailed **3 newsletters to nearly 1,300 incarcerated people** across California and in states including Colorado, Massachusetts, and Washington.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

- Welcomed new team members**
- This year, APSC has been fortunate to welcome **4 new staff members into APSC**. Mac Hoang, graduate of UC Berkeley joins our team as the Reentry Manager, Chanthon Bun, former Yuri Kochiyama Fellow and Community Advocate at the Asian Law Caucus joins us as a reentry coordinator, Ana Lapota, a graduate of UCLA joins us as a reentry coordinator and Anoop Prasad as our in-house counsel.

## Grassroots fundraising through the Freedom Ride 2022

- This year APSC collectively raised over **\$28K with 358 supporters and over 40 riders through our 2022 Freedom Ride**. These funds will go towards our work of supporting incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, sharing community knowledge inside prison (ROOTS program), and building anti-deportation campaigns to keep our loved ones here. This year APSC's Freedom Ride raised over \$28,000.



Caption: APSC Freedom Ride 2022 participants!

## Strengthen community connections

- APSC continued old traditions by hosting a community BBQ to celebrate the end of the summer and **hosted the first overnight camping trip with community partners** which aimed to strengthen relationships among API reentry organizations at Lake Chabot.



Caption: APSC Community BBQ and Camping Trip!

## To Our Supporters

This work is possible because of the incredible support of our community members, volunteers, partner organizations, and funders.

Because of your support, APSC was able to build our capacity, serve more clients, and expand our programming.

Our deepest gratitude to you all for your continuous support, thank you!

## How to Support

- To make an online donation, visit [asianprisonersupport.org](https://asianprisonersupport.org)
- To make a check donation:
  - Make a check payable to Chinese for Affirmative Action with APSC in the memo line, and mail to 17 Walter U. Lum Place, San Francisco, CA 94108.
  - If you have any questions, or for contributions of securities, matching gifts from employers, IRA contributions, or planned giving, contact us at 415-274-6750 or [donations@caasf.org](mailto:donations@caasf.org)

APSC is fiscally sponsored by Chinese for Affirmative Action, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit civil rights organization. Contributions to APSC via CAA are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.