

NEWS RELEASE

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Devata
Giving Circle



From Surviving to Thriving!

CAMBODIAN AMERICAN WOMEN GIVING CIRCLE ANNOUNCES 2011 GRANTS

\$10,500 in grants to advance human rights of Cambodian American women and girls

[31 Dec – San Francisco] The Devata Giving Circle (DGC) is proud to announce its second round of grants totaling \$10,500 to four community-based organizations working to support Cambodian American women and girls. Banteay Srei, which received an inaugural grant of \$2,500 in 2009, was awarded a renewal grant of \$3,000. The Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI), Cambodian Community Development Inc (CCDI), and Applied Social Research Institute of Cambodia (ASRIC) each received \$2,500. CERI, CCDI, and Banteay Srei are based in Oakland, CA. ASRIC is based in New York, NY. All four organizations are eligible to receive an additional 50% match from AAPIP (Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy) which has established a giving circle campaign to promote community philanthropy.

The Devata Giving Circle, the first Cambodian American women led circle, was founded in 2010 based on a shared commitment to advance thriving Cambodian American communities across the United States.

Each grantee exemplifies the commitment and vibrant spirit of the Cambodian American community. By providing safe spaces and options for young women at risk of sexual exploitation, giving voice to survivors of the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields who have long been silenced, healing and giving hope to a generation of women lost between the cracks, and supporting a community that continues to struggle in the inner-city poverty and violence, Banteay Srei, ASRIC, CERI, and CCDI are contributing to and helping to build the thriving Cambodian communities that the Devata Giving Circle envisions. It is a community in which women and girls are healthy, engaged, and empowered to lead.

Cambodia has a gruesome history, one that has paralyzed survivors and the community at large. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, an estimated 1.7 million people perished as a result of executions, forced labor, malnutrition, starvation, torture, and disease. Thousands fled to refugee camps and then resettled to receiving countries, like the U.S., in the 1980s. As a result of their experience, many survivors suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and struggle with depression, high poverty rates, low academic performance, domestic violence, and vices such as a gambling and alcoholism. Young Cambodian-Americans are more likely to drop out of high school and/or go to jail than they are to graduate from college. However, despite these overwhelming challenges, there is a strong survival spirit of resilience and vibrancy that runs through Cambodian communities across the U.S.

The Devata Giving Circle was born out of this resilient spirit to not only survive but to build thriving families and communities. Like the *devata*, a female guardian spirit, women and girls are divine and powerful change agents and are the cornerstones of their community. DGC believes that if you improve the lives of women and girls, and communities will improve. We, therefore, strategically invest in organizations committed to serving women and girls.

For the young women of Banteay Srei, the emergence of DGC is inspiring and affirming. When asked what it was like to find out that Cambodian American women raised money to support them in finding healthy alternatives to street life, they said:

"I feel thankful. It's cool to know that they're like us, because they understand, and their parents went through [similar] struggles."

"I feel thankful and special for them giving us money. I also feel that it's awesome that women can also be supportive and work."

The Devata Giving Circle is a vehicle to empower and engage Cambodian Americans in philanthropy and works to promote collaborative giving in order to support organizations working to advance the human rights of Cambodian women and girls. With support from our friends and allies, we are part of a national movement to build democratic, grassroots philanthropy.

Devata Giving Circle is hosted by the [Asian Pacific Fund](#) (APF), a 501(c)(3) organization, and is a member of the AAPIP National Giving Circle Network.

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