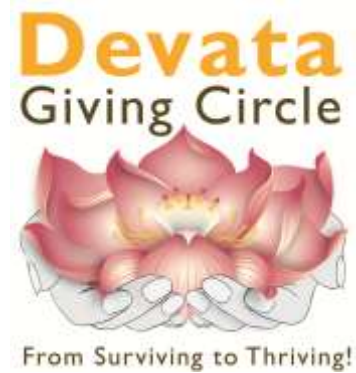


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CAMBODIAN AMERICAN WOMEN GIVING CIRCLE ANNOUNCES \$13,000 IN GRANTS IN 2012

[31 Dec – San Francisco] The Devata Giving Circle (Devata) is proud to announce its third round of grants totaling \$13,000 to five community-based organizations working to empower Cambodian American women and girls. Since its founding in 2010, the circle has granted a total of \$26,000 to 7 organizations. With matching grants from Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP), Devata has mobilized more than \$38,000 to support organizations serving Cambodian American women and girls in the United States.

In 2012, the Devata Giving Circle made the following grants:

- \$3,000 to **Banteay Srei**, Oakland, CA
- \$3,000 to **Center for Empowering Refugees & Immigrants (CERI)**, Oakland, CA
- \$2,500 to **Khmer Girls in Action (KGA)**, Long Beach, CA
- \$2,500 to **Khmer Arts (KA)**, Long Beach, CA
- \$2,000 to **MEKONG**, Bronx, NY

In addition, grantees received a 50% matching grant from AAPIP, totaling \$6,500 in 2012.

Grantees exemplify the commitment and vibrant spirit of Cambodian American communities. Operating in urban cities, **Banteay Srei** and **Khmer Girls in Action** provide safe spaces for young women and girls at risk and empower them to become strong advocates able to maneuver out of poverty and away from violence. **Khmer Arts** serves the largest Cambodian American community in the country and uses Khmer classical dance to ground a generation of young Cambodian Americans girls and boys in the sacred cultural tradition of dance. **CERI**, founded by a clinical psychologist, offers culturally appropriate counseling to older Cambodian American women so they are able to heal and address their traumatic past. Devata is helping to seed **MEKONG**, the first organization of its kind to serve the Southeast Asian American population in the Bronx, NY. It uses social and cultural programming as a tool to mobilize community members and integrate them into a leadership development strategy. Devata works in partnership with these organizations as part of a larger effort to build thriving communities 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), depression, high poverty rates, low academic performance, domestic violence, and struggle with gambling and alcoholism. 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, a vehicle to empower and engage Cambodian Americans and allies in philanthropy, 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. They are the cornerstones of their community. Devata, therefore, strategically invests in organizations committed to serving women and girls.

For the young women in Khmer Girls in Action, the existence of the Devata Giving Circle is novel and inspiring. Asked their feelings upon learning that Cambodian American women raised money to support organizations like KGA, they said this:

“I feel very happy because I grew up being taught that Cambodian women stayed home and did housework. So knowing that there are Cambodian women working hard to support organizations like KGA makes me feel good.”

“I actually did not know there were Cambodian American professional women so it . . . surprises me that they exist and they gave us a grant.”

“I feel special because someone acknowledges us. I feel like our purpose is served. Having a face and voice.”

The 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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