Press Release

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Changing Tides Hosts Inaugural ‘Ripple Effect: Walk for Suicide Prevention’ to Nurture Hope and Support Mental Health Resources in the AANHPI Community

LONG BEACH, CA - On July 16, 2022, Changing Tides, a program of Little Tokyo Service Center, hosted ‘Ripple Effect: Walk for Suicide Prevention’ at Jack Rose Track at California State University, Long Beach. With over 400 participants, volunteers and countless donors, the event raised over $100,000 for Changing Tides’ programs and initiatives to support mental health and suicide prevention in the AANHPI (Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) community.

According to recent statistics, suicide is now the leading cause of death for Asian Americans aged 15-24. Ripple Effect aimed to raise awareness for suicide prevention and generate funds to support Changing Tides’ mental health work within the AANHPI community. For those who lost a loved one to suicide, Ripple Effect served as a moment of reflection and unity, and an opportunity to take action to prevent future tragedies. Attendees created and joined walking teams, and participated in time-based walks in honor of individuals or groups. For example, some attendees participated in a 21-minute walk to honor Nick Song, who died by suicide at 21 years of age, while others participated in a 33-minute walk to raise awareness for the 33% of deaths of AANHPI aged 15-24 which are caused by suicide.

Guest speakers Bonnie Tang and Greg Song who lost their son Nick earlier last year, and Linh Vo, a close friend of Nick’s, spoke about the dire need to destigmatize mental illnesses and raise awareness around suicide prevention. J-Town Taiko Club kicked off the walk with a powerful taiko performance and, adjacent to the walking track, mental health information booths and food vendors welcomed attendees and passersby.

“It really warms my heart to see that so many people are concerned about mental health and I’ve been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support,” shared Bonnie. “Hopefully this will bring some momentum so that we can do more and raise the level of conversation around mental health.”

Shortly after their son’s death, Bonnie and Greg got involved with Changing Tides, compelled to prevent other parents from suffering the tragedy of losing a child to suicide. Searching for an organization to donate the koden they received from Nick’s funeral, (monetary condolence gifts given to the family of the deceased, as is customary in Japanese culture), Bonnie and Greg were introduced to Changing Tides and helped organize Ripple Effect in honor of their son Nick.
“While the pain of loss remains with us always, by channeling our deep love for our lost ones to positive change, we are healing and moving forward. It gives us tremendous hope that we can collectively create ripple effects of kindness, generosity and care to those struggling with mental health challenges as well as their family and friends,” Tang said in her speech.

Funds raised from the event will go towards supporting Changing Tides’ programs and initiatives like CT Stream, a therapy stipend program aimed toward AANHPI young adults that provides 6-10 free therapy sessions. For more information about Changing Tides, please visit the Changing Tides website at https://thechangingtides.org or reach out to Matthew Yonemura, Changing Tides Outreach Coordinator, at myonemura@ltsc.org.

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ABOUT CHANGING TIDES
Changing Tides (CT) is a program of Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) and aims to normalize mental health in the AAPI community through events, outreach and education, and open conversations. What started in 2018 as an idea by a group of college friends has grown to become a program that reaches 5000 AAPI young adults and families through various workshops, forums, activities and events. thechangingtides.org

ABOUT LTSC
For over 40 years, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) has provided a safety net of social welfare and community development services to empower people and communities in need. Starting with its home in Little Tokyo, LTSC preserves and strengthens the unique ethnic communities of the Southern California region where people, culture and collective future matter. www.ltsc.org