

Ambassador Sichan Siv shares his story of the American dream

BY ELAINE YEUNG

Ambassador Sichan Siv, United States Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, was invited by Clayton Fong, Executive Director of NAPCA, to visit some of California's Asian elderly programs as a follow up to the Plan of Action adopted at the United Nations Second World Assembly on Aging held in Madrid, Spain in March. Ambassador Siv and Mr. Fong were part of the 24-member U.S. delegation named by President Bush to attend the assembly.

Ambassador Siv attended NAPCA's SCSEP meeting and celebration of Asian Heritage Month and Older American Month in Los Angeles on May 23 and visited Self-Help for the Elderly's Technology & Information Empowerment (TIE) Center in San Francisco on May 24. Ambassador Siv described the common challenges faced by different countries on aging issues as well as how successful programs like

SCSEP can be a model for providing employment training and retraining for elderly to be adopted by service agencies around the globe.

Clayton Fong described Ambassador Siv as a profound example of the true American dream that America is the land of opportunity. Ambassador Siv was a refugee from Cambodia. He escaped to Thailand in 1976, after having been in forced labor camps for one year, during which he was twice marked for execution. After his escape, he was ordained a Buddhist monk in Thailand. Later that year, he was resettled as a refugee in Wallingford, Connecticut. He had been a flight attendant, a high school teacher and a Manhattan taxi driver. From 1989 to 1993, Ambassador Siv had served as Deputy Assistant to the President for Public Liaison under the Administration of the 41st President, George Bush.



(From left) Spokesman for U.S. Mission to the UN Ric Grenell, NAPCA SCSEP National Director Polly Chang, Ambassador Sichan Siv, NAPCA Executive Director Clayton Fong and NAPCA Board Member Rev. Malaki Tauiliili



Benjamin Li presents Ambassador Siv and Clayton Fong with his drawings made on a computer



Ambassador Sichan Siv sharing his success story with the audience



Ambassador Siv writing his name in Chinese translation with a Chinese writing tablet



Clayton Fong speaks at the meeting