



## SPRC • Suicide Prevention Resource Center

### Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiatives by Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Grantees

Compiled by Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Education Development Center, Inc.

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The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) supports campuses, states, and tribal communities to support suicide prevention work, as authorized by the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. The following are eight examples of suicide prevention initiatives by Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) grantees that emphasize preventing suicide among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AA/PI).

**Chaminade University of Honolulu:** The E Ho’opili No Na Haumana Project at the Chaminade University of Honolulu adapted their QPR Gatekeeper Training to include a native Hawaiian clinical psychologist who lost his son to suicide. This grantee reports that “his story resonates with the local native Hawaiian trainees,” helping them make better use of the standard gatekeeper training, which does not address the cultural needs of an AA/PI audience. They have videotaped his presentation so it can be used at other trainings. The E Ho’opili No Na Haumana Project has also created a campus resource center that houses a wide array of resources, available to students and staff, that are specific to the island of Oahu and the cultures and diverse peoples of Hawaii. The resource center also offers free coffee and a space to “wala`au” (“talk story”) – a Hawaiian custom of informal chatting that attracts students who would not necessarily use a more formal counseling center. Later this year, the program will implement social skill building groups using a curriculum that is culturally relevant to the AA/PI student body.

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**Guam Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** One of the primary audiences for the Guam Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse’s Focus on Life (FOL) program are AA/PI students and young adults, including those from ethnic groups with high suicide rates (including Chuukese and Chamorro). Focus on Life has trained more than 1,700 behavioral health and primary care providers, first responders, educators, and community members in two evidence-based suicide prevention programs: ASIST and safeTALK. Focus on Life’s Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) program is a culturally specific effort that helps community members “explore their personal roles and responsibilities in substance abuse, violence, bullying, and suicide prevention.” The FOL media campaign includes newsletters, brochures, posters, documentaries, radio/television/print advertisements, articles, a service provider directory, and press releases, as well as a website ([www.peaceguam.org](http://www.peaceguam.org)) and Facebook page (Focus on Life - Guam). The media campaign seeks to increase knowledge and awareness of suicide prevention and treatment services, promote local and national helplines, and increase help-seeking behaviors. Other efforts include suicide awareness and prevention presentations for middle and high school students, a suicide survivor support group, and *A Profile of Suicide on Guam*, a data document developed in collaboration with Guam’s State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup. Contact: Barbara S.N. Benavente, MPA [barbara.benavente@mail.dmhsa.guam.gov](mailto:barbara.benavente@mail.dmhsa.guam.gov)

**Mt. San Antonio College (Walnut, California):** The Mt. San Antonio (Mt. SAC) Suicide Prevention Program created a workshop titled “Understanding Depression in Chinese” and an accompanying trifold brochure that explores depression and ways people can help themselves and others, as well as how to seek help for depression and in the event of a suicidal crisis. The brochures are available in both English and Chinese. Contact: Livier Martinez, LCSW [LMMartinez@MtSAC.edu](mailto:LMMartinez@MtSAC.edu)

**School of the Art Institute of Chicago:** The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) includes a large number of Korean and Chinese students. The SAIC CARES suicide prevention program is training

the school's Korean Student Advisor/Liaison to become a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainer. She will participate in MHFA trainings to teach other members of the campus community (with an emphasis on people of Korean and Chinese heritage) to help people in crisis receive appropriate care. The Student Advisor/Liaison will be conducting trainings in Korean. The SAIC CARES program hopes to eventually provide MHFA trainings in Chinese. Contact: Joe Behen, PhD [jbehen@saic.edu](mailto:jbehen@saic.edu)

**Thomas Jefferson University (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania):** The JeffHELP program at Thomas Jefferson University provided specialized outreach to Malaysian students who complete their third and fourth years of medical training at the Jefferson Medical College through a joint program with a Malaysian university. This targeted outreach was designed to respond to challenges related to their international status, acculturation, and cultural reluctance to seek help for problems, which could put these students at risk for suicide. Contact: Deanna Nobleza, MD [Deanna.Nobleza@jefferson.edu](mailto:Deanna.Nobleza@jefferson.edu)

**University of California Davis School of Medicine:** Over half of the students at UC Davis School of Medicine are non-Caucasian, with a majority of these being Asian-American; a few are Pacific Islanders. The University's GLS-funded suicide prevention program designed a culturally sensitive suicide prevention workshop, which is presented to incoming students and their families during orientation. This GLS grantee also created a brochure for students and families that discusses the stressors faced by students and recommends resources for helping students address the stress they may encounter in medical school. Contact: Andreea L. Seritan, MD [andreea.seritan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu](mailto:andreea.seritan@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu)

**University of Hawaii at Hilo:** The UH Hilo Suicide Prevention Program serves a student body that includes a large number of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The Suicide Prevention Program employs a Pacific Islander student who is building awareness of suicide prevention and conducting outreach activities, including creating a Facebook page and conducting face-to-face outreach on campus using the slogan "You Matter." The Suicide Prevention Program is also planning to collaborate with the campus Pacific Islander Student Center and conduct bystander intervention training targeting AA/PI students. Contact: Sulma Gandhi DBA, MSc [sulma@hawaii.edu](mailto:sulma@hawaii.edu)

**University of Hawaii at Manoa/John A Burns School of Medicine:** The Hawai'i's Caring Communities Initiative (CCI) for Youth Suicide is working with six rural communities to recruit and train youth leaders using the Connect Suicide Prevention Program (an evidence-based program included in the SPRC Best Practices Registry). The majority of youth leaders participating in this program are Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (including Native Hawaiians). In Hawaii, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian youth are at higher risk for suicide than other youth. Connect is also being used to train program staff, community members, and healthcare providers as gatekeepers. The Caring Communities Initiative is using information from the evaluation of these efforts, as well as key informant interviews and focus groups, to tailor Connect for Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians while maintaining fidelity to the principles and evidence base of the original program. Contact: Jane Chung-Do, DrPH [ChungJ@dop.hawaii.edu](mailto:ChungJ@dop.hawaii.edu) and Deborah Goebert, DrPH [GoebertD@dop.hawaii.edu](mailto:GoebertD@dop.hawaii.edu)

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