

ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION FOUNDATION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

The experiences of immigrants who entered the United States through the Immigration Station at Angel Island remind us of our country's complicated immigration history. The stories that AIISF is collecting and preserving help to ensure that our nation keeps its promise of liberty and freedom. These lessons are all the more important during times like the present when immigration is a flashpoint issue globally.

The past year has been pivotal for AIISF, and we anticipate that the coming year will be one of significant growth, as we near completion of the Pacific Coast Immigration Center at Angel Island State Park.

During the past 12 months, we have continued our 31-year tradition of preserving tangible evidence of the challenges immigrants faced when entering the country via the Pacific Coast. AIISF continues to collect the rich stories and personal journeys of thousands of diverse immigrants, and shares them through education initiatives and public programs. Our core programs include restoring and interpreting the Immigration Station structures and educating the public about immigration issues.

**AIISF Program Updates**

**IMMIGRANT DREAMS, HERO VOICES BENEFIT.** AIISF held its twelfth annual fundraising benefit on March 9, 2016. More than 340 people took part in *Immigrant Dreams, Hero Voices*, and the event raised \$254,000 to support AIISF's programs and activities. As always, a highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Immigrant Heritage Awards. Here are brief biographies of the recipients in the four award categories:

- **Lifetime Achievement:** **Tyrus Wong** is a 105-year old immigrant who arrived on Angel Island in 1920 when he was ten years old. He went on to have an illustrious career as an artist. Highlights of his career include being responsible for the beautiful painterly quality of the Disney movie *Bambi*, working for Warner Brothers studio for many years, and designing best-selling greeting cards for Hallmark. He is the subject of a new award-winning film, *Tyrus*.
- **Community Leaders:** **Al Cheng** and **Steve Owyang** have volunteered for 25 years to run the "In Search of Roots" program which helps young people learn about their roots in Southern China. **Larissa Krassovsky** has been active for a lifetime in the Russian American Women's League.
- **Humanitarian:** **Kanwal Rekhi** co-founded TIE (The Indus Entrepreneurs), a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Indian and other entrepreneurs get their starts.
- **Educator:** Professor **Marn Cha** has taught, documented and written extensively about Korean immigrant heritage in the San Joaquin Valley. He teaches at the California State University, Fresno

**THE PACIFIC COAST IMMIGRATION CENTER.** Slated to open in the summer of 2017, the Center will tell the personal stories of immigrants who arrived in the United States through the Pacific Coast. Their stories will enable visitors to reflect on how contemporary immigrants' experiences fit into a broader history of exclusion. The Center will invigorate current thinking on immigration, celebrate the crucial role immigrants play in America, and showcase the contributions to the United States of contemporary immigrants.

We are in the midst of the “Open the Doors Campaign” to raise the funding necessary to:

- **Renovate the Public Hospital building and to install compelling exhibits** that will vividly showcase both the experiences of the diverse populations who passed through the Immigration Station and its Hospital—more than 1.1 million people, from more than eighty countries—and those who have arrived since the Station was closed in 1940.
- **Create robust and broad-reaching education and outreach programs**, including exhibits, performances, cultural and community-building events, resources for ancestry research, symposia on immigration, and a significant online presence to reach global audiences.

The historical significance of the Angel Island Immigration Station and the comprehensive nature of our new programming will make the Pacific Coast Immigration Center a major cultural site that will broaden and integrate Pacific Coast immigration stories into the national immigration narrative that has historically focused almost exclusively on European immigration through the East Coast.

Our goal for the “Open the Doors Campaign” is to raise \$3 million to build on the \$11 million in funding already committed by both the Federal and California State governments. As of now, we have raised 20% of the \$3 million goal.

AIISF has contracted with Second Story, an exhibit-design firm based in Portland, Oregon, to develop the exhibits for the Pacific Coast Immigration Center, as well as related online content. Second Story focuses on responsive environments, story-driven experiences, experimentation, and innovation. It has special expertise integrating on-site and online experiences. Second Story has completed projects for institutions such as the Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta; *Native Voices*, for the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland; the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis; and a significant photography exhibit for San Francisco's new Museum of Modern Art. Second Story has completed the first phase of design for the Pacific Coast Immigrant Center.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH ANCESTRY.COM.** Last year, AIISF began a formal partnership with Ancestry.com, the world's largest for-profit genealogy company. Ancestry.com's database of historical records assists individuals who want to trace their family trees. However, its focus to date has been on Europe. On June 18, Ancestry.com will host a conference in South San Francisco that will teach participants how to use the Ancestry.com site, with a special emphasis on new databases that cover immigration through the Pacific Coast. Ancestry.com will publicize the conference to its hundreds of thousands of members, so we expect a thousand people to

participate in this conference. The day before the conference, participants will have the option to visit the Angel Island Immigration Station as part of a conference-related tour.

Our partnership also calls for Ancestry.com to digitize thousands of paper records from Angel Island currently housed at the National Archives and other West Coast archives and make them available to its members.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS, PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES.** AIISF has produced or partnered with other organizations on a number of public programs and events, including:

- **Participating in a meeting of the 1882 Foundation**, whose mission is to broaden public awareness of the history and continuing significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In May 2015, AIISF Executive Director Michael McKechnie attended an 1882 Foundation meeting to begin the work of linking through a central website all immigration-related sites in the United States, particularly those focused on Asian and Pacific Island immigration.
- Hosting at the Delancey Street Foundation a June 3 **premier of films produced through our “3 People” project**. See our description below of this project.
- Hosting our annual **Family History and Reunion Day**. At AIISF’s 2015 Family History Day, held on July 11, a wide variety of speakers shared fascinating stories of the different ethnic groups and nationalities that were detained on Angel Island, including Russians, Koreans, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Japanese and Austrians. We captured these on video so all people interested in these stories can enjoy the richness and diversity of the American experiences that began on Angel Island. Please visit this website to hear the stories: <http://aiisf.org/component/content/article/60-events/1056-family-historyreunion-day-videos>
- Co-hosting with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), a **Naturalization Ceremony** on September 19, 2015. In addition to 23 new citizens and their families, special guests included John Kramar, District Director, USCIS; Assemblymember David Chiu who was the keynote speaker; Congressman Jared Huffman, congratulatory speaker; Coast Guard Vice Admiral Charles Ray, congratulatory speaker; Mario Flores, Department of Human Services Office of the Secretary, who read new citizens' names; and Carol Keller, Chief of Staff, USCIS, ceremony official. We plan to co-host another Naturalization Ceremony on Angel Island this fall.
- Co-hosting with the Nichi Bei Foundation and the National Japanese American Historical Society a second **Nikkei (Japanese American) pilgrimage** to Angel Island. This event on October 3 drew 400 participants to hear cultural performances and talks about Japanese immigration through Angel Island.
- Participating in the annual **San Francisco History Days**. At this two-day event, held March 5-6, AIISF representatives staffed a table with information about the Immigration Station. We showed our pop-up exhibit telling the stories of 12 immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America who came through Angel Island.
- Co-hosting with the Chinese Historical Society of American a **book launch event** on March 26 for historian Erika Lee’s new book, *Making of Asian America*. This scholarly

work is a history of Asian Americans and their role in American life, from the arrival of the first Asians in the Americas to the present-day. Published to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the United States' Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that has remade our "nation of immigrants," this is a new and definitive history of Asian Americans.

- Assisting on a **special issue of the magazine *Cobblestones*** to focus on Angel Island. This magazine geared to middle school students has a circulation of 20,000.
- Securing a **book contract** with McMillian, a major publisher, for a text book on the 1882 Exclusion Act and its impact, including the development of the Angel Island Immigration Station, to be written by historian Judy Yung.
- **Hosting several events on Angel Island for descendants of Japanese and Russians who had been detained on Angel Island.** Professor Charlie Egan of San Francisco State University identified the names of the detainees from their writings left in the Immigration Station and then tracked down their descendants. Unlike the Chinese immigrants who left carved and written legacies on the Immigration Station walls, these men and boys didn't mind identifying themselves by name.
- **Touring Angel Island with filmmakers** who are working with Ric Burns (brother of award-winning documentarian Ken Burns) on a film about the Chinese Exclusion Act which will air on PBS in the fall.
- **Touring our traveling exhibit: *Gateway to Gold Mountain*.** The University of Oregon will be hosting the exhibit from January to April. And then from May to November the Locke Foundation in the Sacramento River Delta will host the exhibit.

**IMMIGRANT VOICES INITIATIVE.** The goal of the Immigrant Voices Initiative is to position AIISF as an important resource for a comprehensive understanding of West Coast immigration by creating a living and ever-growing historical archive of stories of the immigrant experience. The project's primary objective is to grow a Web-based portal (<http://aiisf.org/immigrant-voices/>) where the heroic and humbling stories of the diverse immigrant populations who passed through the Immigration Station on Angel Island will be joined by equally engaging stories from more recent immigrants. We are building public awareness of our story archive as a fact-based repository of information and experiences that can support the ongoing national debate on immigration policy.

We currently have 208 stories available online, with more to come. Since late 2014, we have added more than 95 new stories to our website. These include 35 generated by AIISF staff and volunteers, 27 from community members, and about 20 from students at Mills College and San Francisco State University.

We're pleased to report that we've completed the re-design of the Immigrant Voices webpage. The new website is graphically more inviting and is far easier to use. Uploading stories, reading stories and researching the site have all been dramatically improved.

In February, we added to the website a series of writing tips, prompts, and questions to inspire contemplation, to encourage more profound story-development and to make it easier for immigrants to share their stories. The writing prompts include questions that encourage

contributors to explore the context of their immigration story, including what compelled them to leave home, what laws were in place in the United States at the time of arrival, and what geographic challenges they had to overcome.

We're continuing to partner with San Francisco State University's Asian American Studies Department whose students utilize our story collection in their research. AIISF Community Relations Director Grant Din and Director of Programs Lisa Van Cleef have continued our working relationship with Mills College professor Maggie Hunter. Students in Professor Hunter's Sociology of Immigration class have been assigned to interview immigrants and to write up their stories using the AIISF Immigrants Voices protocol. This has resulted in 13 new stories added to our archive.

Other partnerships are in the works, including teacher trainings that will emphasize the website and its contents.

**3 PEOPLE PROJECT:** We began this program in February 2015 in collaboration with Cameron House in San Francisco Chinatown and the Center for Asian American Media with the goals of (1) educating youth in Cameron House's program for high school students about the immigration experiences of older generations, (2) teaching these young people media skills, and (3) sharing immigrants' stories widely through the AIISF website. The youth in the "3 People Project" toured the Angel Island Immigration Station site, learned about the history of immigrants who went through the Immigration Station, and reflected on their own families' immigration experiences. They were then trained in video and interview techniques and assigned to talk with an older immigrant about her native home, immigration experiences, and dreams for life in America. Each conversation was videotaped, edited down to five minutes, and posted on the Immigrant Voices webpage. Please take a moment to view these moving short films. All can be seen here: <http://www.aiisf.org/programs/1044-3-people>.

Representatives of the Asian Art Museum saw the films and were so moved that they have invited us to show the films and present a panel discussion with elders and high school film makers on July 16, 2016.

These short films had such an impact that the elders who were on camera are now requesting video production training for themselves. They saw the importance of capturing their immigration stories on film and now want to turn the lens on others in their generation. In addition, transitional youth, those between the ages of 18-24, are also requesting to be a part of this program, capturing their family and community stories.

**PORTS:** The award-winning Parks Online Resource for Teachers and Students (PORTS) program, our distance-learning program that uses the power of interactive technology to help teach common-core state standards in the context of California State Parks is entering its second year. In partnership with the California State Parks Department, we created a PORTS Immigration Station module based on our existing "Immigrant Journey" curriculum. AIISF worked with a curriculum developer to create PORTS-related lesson plans and a real-time

videoconference component enabling classrooms nationwide to communicate with a park ranger, interactively explore Angel Island's Immigration Station, and learn about the experiences of individuals and immigrant groups who passed through it.

The PORTS program is open to all schools, but we target outreach to "Title I" schools which serve economically disadvantaged students in primarily urban and culturally diverse areas. Many of the students in Title I schools are immigrants or have immigrant parents.

To publicize the PORTS program, our curriculum developer attended the annual conference of the California Council for the Social Studies, a statewide gathering for social science teachers, to present a workshop on the Angel Island PORTS module.

During its first year, our PORTS module proved to be tremendously successful. By the end of the 2015 school year, 2,790 students—in 94 classes from 44 schools—participated in the program. By the end of the current academic year, we anticipate that our PORTS module will have reached 3,500 students. Schools served to date are in California, Alaska, Florida, Maryland, Montana, and Pennsylvania. That schools from outside California are requesting our program is a welcome indication of the potential that the Immigration Station module has for informing the national dialogue on immigration.

While we are excited about the national reach of our PORTS module, we are also concentrating on reaching underserved areas of California. During the past year, the California State Parks Foundation funded a teacher training session that AIISF staff led in Imperial County, California's southern-most school district and one of the poorest in the state. An outcome of this outreach and training is that over 650 students from Brawley High School participated in our PORTS module throughout the week of December 14-17.

To give you a sense of the impact that the program has on students and teachers, here is a quote that a teacher shared:

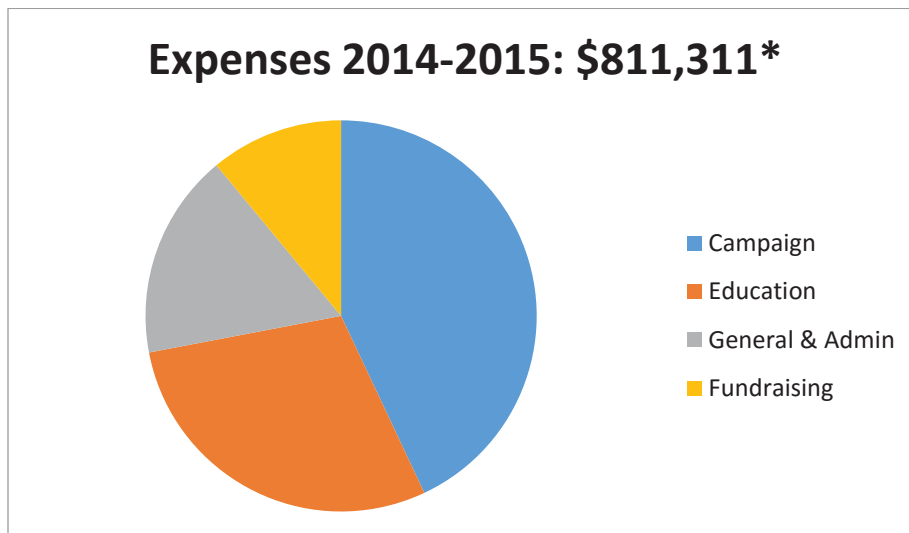
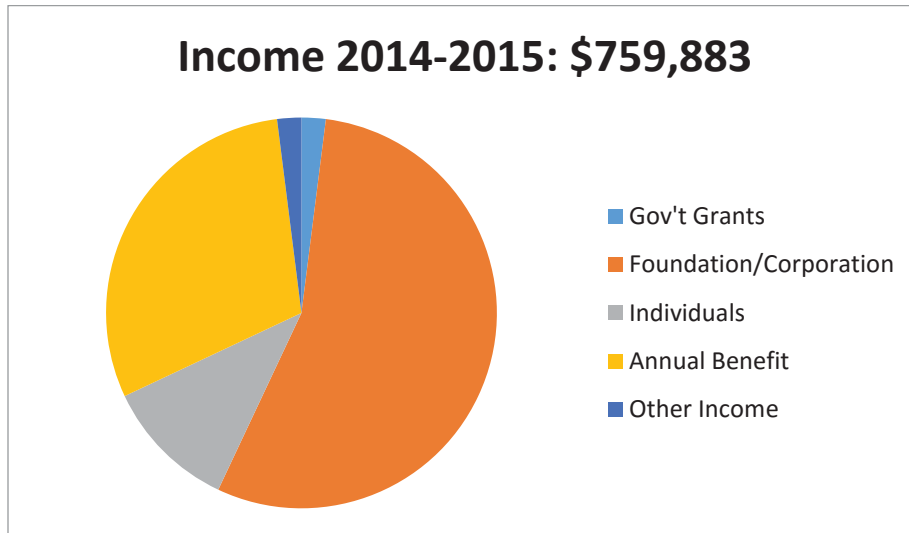
*You told me last year about Angel Island, and I thought, "How good could it be?" -- Well, we did two[PORTS] programs today, and I found out just how good it was -- it was amazing! It was fun to learn right along with the students about California history. In particular, I loved the way Casey [Angel Island park interpreter who leads the program] tied the current debates over immigration from Latin America and Syria into the discussion -- flawless.*

### **AIISF Organizational Development**

The AIISF's work continues to be guided by a three-year Strategic Plan that the Board of Directors established in 2013. Reflecting our renewed commitment that the leadership of AIISF should mirror the breadth of the immigrant groups who both entered the country through Angel Island and arrived after the Immigration Station closed, the Board of Directors has made a conscious effort to expand and diversify the membership of the Board of Directors. We are pleased to report that we recently welcomed two new members to the board: Sonny Lulla and

Rosemarie Nahm. Mr. Lulla is a managing partner of Franklin Park Management (FPM) and Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure India, PLC (IIP), a closed-end fund that invests in basic infrastructure assets in India. Ms. Nahm is a first generation Korean immigrant who is a real estate attorney and community leader who has a passionate interest in researching and sharing immigration history. She is the former general counsel of the Sand Hill Property Company.

### AIISF Financial Reports



\*Expenses include a net asset transfer of \$51,428.

For detailed tax reports for the 2014-2015 (most recently audited) year go to:  
<https://www.guidestar.org/profile/94-2909759>

Should you have any questions about this report, please contact Michael McKechnie, AIISF's Executive Director, at (415) 348-9200, ext. 12 or by e-mail at [mmckechnie@aiisf.org](mailto:mmckechnie@aiisf.org).