

Chan Hopson was a high school teacher in Cambodia when the “killing Fields” began. She survived the work camp and subsequently came to America. She was so thankful, she promised to help as many Khmer children, women and families as possible. Her work to fulfill that promise benefits the entire Long Beach Community.

In 1995, she co-founded Khmer Parent Association (KPA) and has served as its volunteer Executive Director for over 25 years. KPA is instrumental in empowering Cambodians - primarily youth - to pursue a higher education. It provides underachieving, at-risk youth with a Tutoring-After-School program, career guidance, and internship opportunities with local organizations and professionals. Chan Hopson is also founder of the South-East Asian Scholarship, which presents annual awards to 15 graduating high school seniors. For over two decades, she has enriched the lives of hundreds of children in Long Beach.

In addition to being an education champion, Chan Hopson works tirelessly to empower and educate the community residents about critical health issues. Ironically, many parents survived the genocide in the “killing fields” only to die at an early age from serious but preventable or treatable diseases such as diabetes and cancer. She established the first ever Annual Khmer Health Forum to educate the Cambodian community about various health topics and preventive medicine, organized two Khmer Women’s Health Ambassador trainings and one for men, and provided over 10,000 hours of volunteer services to the local St. Mary Medical Center.

While serving the community, she found out that many Cambodian mothers and daughters often do not realize that they inherit a rich heritage and culture through the past glorious Khmer civilization of the Angkor Empire. In 2015, she organized and put on a Khmer Mother and Daughter Inter-generational Leadership Development Training for the purpose of closing the inter-generational gap between the traditional mothers and the Khmer American daughters. To culminate the training program, she and Assembly member Patrick O’Donnell of the 70th District, co-hosted the first ever multicultural Mother & Daughter Conference on Saturday, February 20, 2016 at St. Mary Medical Center. The goals of the conference were to “Build, Develop and Strengthen Relationships Across Cultures, Create Friendly Dialogue, Connect and Share experiences as One Community.” The conference was very successful and it joyfully ended with a great speech from Assembly member Cristina Garcia of the 58th District. Then, this unique mother daughter conference became an annual event to the present time. Each year, many mothers/daughters from different cultural backgrounds participated in the event. During the COVID-19 pandemic, about 200 people registered to attend the virtual 6th Annual Mother/Daughter Conference on Saturday, February 20, 2021. 500 people watched the event on the KPA staff Facebook page and 400 more watched on 14 other Facebook pages and on KhmerTV. Several hundred viewers also saw it on Twitter.

During 40 years of her life in Long Beach, Chan noticed that the young Cambodians are losing their language and culture. Therefore, since 2010 Chan has been advocating to keep the Khmer Language & Culture alive. She and the community leaders and members spoke several times to the LBUSD Board of Education to implement a Khmer Dual Language Immersion Program for the young Cambodian children in Long Beach. She established partnerships with Whittier Elementary School to teach a Khmer After-School-Tutoring class every Thursday from 1:45-4:30 pm and with Mark Twain Library to teach a “Telling Your Story in Khmer” class every Saturday from 3-5pm. The Khmer After-School-Tutoring class at Whittier Elementary has continued online during the pandemic. She also organized the Community Forum with the LBUSD Executive staff so the parents and children would have

an opportunity to voice their opinion directly to them, and also to follow up with the possible implementation of the Khmer Dual Language Immersion Program.

While the parents suddenly had the responsibility to teach their children at home the school lock down, she worked collaboratively with the National Resource for Asian Languages in CSUF to provide a series of 5 webinars to support the parent's mental health and educate them about how to handle their children's education at home.

While Covid-19 was surging so high, she organized the 16th Annual Khmer Health forum by inviting Health Care professionals and the Long Beach City Health Officer to educate the Cambodian Community about the COVID-19 vaccines and the prevention measures to protect the community against the deadly virus. She also worked in partnership with the Long Beach City Office of Equity to register seniors over 65 to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus at McArthur Park.

Chan Hopson is a graduate of multiple educational programs, including the Women's Health Leadership Program, the Executive Leadership Program for non-profits, and the Family Development Credential from the University of Connecticut. She also completed the "Chronic Disease Self- Management Program" training at Stanford University, Mental Health First Aid Training from the Mental Health First Aid USA Program, Savvy Caregivers for Alzheimer's patients training, Strategies for managing conflict in the community by National Conflict Resolution Center, QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Program Training by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Cervical Cancer and prevention from USC oncology Department and HIV/STD training from the Long Beach Health Department.

She is very active in civic engagement and gets involved with countless community activities in the city. She organized many car washes with youth, parents, seniors and the community to raise funds for families of the New York Firefighters killed in 911, Earthquake victims in Haiti, Hurricane Sandy victims, Tsunami Victims in Japan and Typhoon victims in the Philippines.

From May to December 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, she partnered with many local agencies such as the Aids Food Store and AOC7 to provide fresh groceries weekly to almost 2000 families in the neighborhood. On July 18, 2020 she invited the outgoing and incoming LBUSD Superintendents, LBUSD Board Members, Community leaders and Government officials to the 2020 Grab-n-Go Graduation to celebrate the success of almost 100 High School graduates from all LBUSD high schools in the Mark Twain Public Library parking lot. The graduation was very successful because of support from the Long Beach Public Library, the Port of Long Beach, Congressman Alan Lowenthal, 47th District, Senator Lena Gonzalez, District 33, Assemblymember Cristina Garcia, District 58, Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell, District 70, CAA, UCC, Devata Giving Circle, Anonymous Sponsor and California-Cambodia Sister State, Inc. and many generous donors.

Her altruism and selfless work earned her numerous distinguished awards. In March 2020, she was featured on the City of Long Beach Women History Wall. On Nov. 6, 2019 she was inducted into the LBCC Alumni Hall of Fame. She was selected to receive Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia's "Go Long Beach" award on Friday, April 28, 2017, as the 2016 Woman Of The Year in the 70th Assembly District, 2015 Woman of Distinction in International Good Will and Understanding from the Soroptimist International of Long Beach, 2015

Cambodian New Year Grand Marshal from Cam-CC, Steward of the Second District from Councilmember Suja Lowenthal in December 2014, Woman of Distinction in May, 2014 from Senator Ricardo Lara, 33rd Senate District, Outstanding Community Excellent Services Award in 2012 from the Cambodian Business Association, Gene Lentzner Human Relations Award from CCEJ in 2009, and many more.

She has also earned the trust and deep respect of the community for her devotion to improving the lives of humanity. She is married and lives in Long Beach since 1980 and has two grown sons.