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## GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: ASIAN-PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF LONGMONT



The Asian-Pacific Association of Longmont (<http://www.apalconnect.org>) (A-PAL), a grantee (<http://www.commfound.org/grants/grantees/community-trust>) of the Community Foundation, is perhaps best known for presenting terrific Chinese New Year parties, featuring food, crafts, music, dance, and more than a dozen booths.

Besides Chinese individuals and families, A-PAL's Chinese New Year festivities have attracted participants from 62 other nationalities over the past three years – from India, Taiwan and Russia to Mexico, Spain, Norway, Ireland, England, Germany and more.

"We all have so much to learn and gain from one another," says Rita Liu, a first-generation U.S. resident who founded A-PAL in 2010, and who also served as chair of the Longmont Multicultural Action Committee

(<https://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-a-d/community-services-department/multicultural-plan>) (LMAC). "My vision

for A-PAL is to bridge cultural gaps, and to promote cultural understanding and appreciation in our diverse community."

(/file/rita-liu-2017.jpg)



For the past six years, the Silver Creek Leadership Academy

(<http://www.silvercreekleadership.academy>) has collaborated with A-PAL to host the free new year's celebration. At this year's commemoration of the start of the Year of the Rooster, the Shaolin Hung Mei Kung Fu Association (<http://www.shaolinhungmei.org>) performed demonstrations, and the Gu Fueng Tai Chi Club (<http://gufengtaichi.org>) exhibited Tai Chi moves. Additionally, students from the Bohua Chinese School (<http://www.dreamschool.com/bohua/>) performed dances at the A-PAL

event, violin students from the Flatirons Strings Academy (<https://fsamusic.org>) played Chinese musical pieces, and Denver Taiko (<http://www.denvertaiko.org>) members presented traditional Japanese drumming.



"Our mission is to celebrate diversity by creating and hosting cultural, educational, and artistic projects and events," continues Rita. "To do so, we promote participation in school activities and city programs.

"Beyond our Chinese New Year project, we serve the community throughout the year – including referrals for anyone who's unfamiliar with available community resources in Boulder County, and to anyone with specific cultural or language needs."

To date, for example, A-PAL has provided consultation to organizations doing business in China, as well as immigration-related translations, senior tech support services, and translation and other assistance in negotiating with financial institutions, and in coordinating care for health-related concerns.

As well, A-PAL is part of the City of Longmont's Inclusive Communities Celebration

(<https://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-a-d/community-services-department/multicultural-plan/inclusive-communities-celebration>), and its mentorship program with the Silver Creek Leadership Academy teaches students how to be effective leaders and managers through group projects.

"Community-building and hands-on education are key to our mission," explains Rita, who personally mentors a Silver Creek Leadership Academy senior every year. "In turn, volunteers are key to everything we do." A-PAL regularly engages some 50 dedicated volunteers, and around 200 volunteers – including students – for special events like the Chinese New Year event.

Further to its collaboration with the Silver Creek Leadership Academy, A-PAL promotes local multiculturalism through partnerships with the St. Vrain Valley School District (<http://www.svvsd.org>), Front Range Community College (<https://www.frontrange.edu>), the Confucius Institute (<https://www.ccd.edu/org/confucius-institute>), the Boulder Asian-Pacific Alliance (<http://www.bapaweb.org>), and many private businesses, nonprofits, and individuals.

**Together, we're courageously building inclusive and just communities. Join our efforts to make a difference (<https://goo.gl/d0tVLH>) in Boulder County.**

