

Diversity

Asian center ready to help

By Catherine Blalock
Staff Reporter

To meet the needs of the growing Asian population in Lincoln, the Asian Community and Cultural Center opened its doors this past December.

The site of the center, located at 140 S. 27th St., was chosen because of the large number of Asians who live close by, said Paula Reed, resource coordinator for the center.

Its hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After-hours assistance can be arranged, Reed said.

The center is a non-profit organization operating in conjunction with the Lincoln Interfaith Council, which provides services and information to the Asian community.

"We are a clearing house of information," Reed said.

Some of the programs offered are banking information, emergency assistance, free income tax preparation assistance, housing and social service assistance, translation/interpretation and intensive English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) via Southeast Community College.

Maria Vu, banking representative at the center and Union Bank and Trust employee, helps Asians open accounts and borrow loans.

"We believe two major barriers the agency

helps with are language and culture," Vu said. "The language barrier prevents them from getting help."

The center also has a liaison service with the Lincoln Police Department.

Services include a bilingual video library, crime prevention, awareness on cultural and legal issues, victimization assistance and Lincoln Southeast Asian Youth Club.

Help from volunteers is essential to the operation of the center.

Hien Nyugen, a senior at Lincoln High School, became involved with the center through her connections with Lincoln High's Asian Caucus.

Nyugen serves on the board for the Asian Center and has been a member of the board before the doors to the center opened.

"I represent the youth in the Asian community," Nyugen said.

Mediation services are available to help settle disagreements and youth programs such as dance groups are also at the center.

One dance group is the Heart of the Motherland. It performs the traditional Asian dances and performed at the opening of the center.

"It (the center) is important because of the very large population in Lincoln. It is a chance for them to voice their concerns and share their concerns with others," she said.



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Huong Bui helps Thom Vu fill out a healthstyles questionnaire during a breast cancer workshop at the Asian Community and Cultural Center, 140 S. 27 St. on Saturday, May 20. More than 50 women attended the workshop which centered on fitness, AIDS education and breast cancer.

Indian Center welcomes, serves community

By Justin Fisher
Staff Reporter

The Indian Center was originally established to provide human services and a source of cultural identity to Native Americans.

In recent years it has taken on the added task of promoting multicultural awareness by delivering services to all eligible people.

The Indian Center is located at 1100 Military Road, which is near 14th Street, north of campus.

The Indian Center provides a variety of programs including: Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Legal Counsel, Adult Education, Employment Development, Senior Employment, Health and Community Services, Commodities, Child Welfare, and Housing.

Sue Bad Moccasin, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coordinator for the Center, said these programs "serve not only Indians but also low income families."

She said the services are also provided at Indian Center sites in Omaha and Scottsbluff.

Bad Moccasin said volunteers were welcome to help with any of the programs offered through the Center, but she added: "If you really want to learn about a culture you need to spend more than just one hour."

The Center also maintains a gift shop offering a variety of Native American craftwork, Bad Moccasin said.

She said the Center also frequently hosts art exhibits, Pow Wows and Community Gatherings.

"Almost everything we do is free to the public. If you see a Pow Wow going, you're welcome to come join us."

The Center also provides some meals for low-income senior citizens.

As they played cards after one of these lunches, Eulah Kroger and Bernice Anderson said they appreciated this service.

"It's a good place to come for entertainment. You can visit and play cards."

"Almost everything we do is free to the public. If you see a Pow Wow going, you're welcome to come join us."

SUE BAD MOCCASIN
Teen Pregnancy Prevention
Coordinator for the Indian Center

"It gets you out of the apartment."

One gentleman at the lunch, who asked that his name not be printed, was concerned that the Center's new multicultural focus detracts from its original mission.

He said the Indian Center is "not like what it used to be."

He was concerned the Center was losing funding and was therefore unable to keep up the quality of its programs. He was also worried about the number of non-Indians who were being hired, especially for jobs that he thought required special cultural knowledge.

He said, "When the gift shop needed a clerk, they hired a Vietnamese. To work there, (a person) should have had knowledge of regalia beadwork."



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Richard Long explains the rules of a stick game to children inside a tepee at the Celebrate Indian Children & Youth Workshops, May 20. The weekend event was held at the Indian Center, 1100 Military Road. Long said historically Indian children prepared for their roles as adults by observing their parents and grandparents. Their important role as children was to enjoy being children, Long said.