

Agency Highlight

Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement



Koreatown Champions for Change Share Kimchi-Making Tradition



In April 2016, staff from Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement (APIFM) began holding regular Champions for Change classes on healthy eating at Menlo Family Apartments, an affordable housing site run by Koreatown Youth and Community Center (KYCC). Every Thursday night since then, a group of adult and senior Korean American women has gathered with us to learn and talk about nutrition, active living, and what we can do together to help the broader community think about health.



Early on, it was apparent that our class participants, whom we fondly refer to as our “aunties,” brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table when it comes to living healthy. They told us about sesame smoothies they made themselves every morning, about how they walk every day, and about the different kinds of Kimchi they’ve been preparing at home for decades. That’s when the idea of a “How to Make Kimchi” class bubbled up, and we began discussing and planning this event for the aunties’ community project.



What is Kimchi? It’s traditionally a side dish consisting of fermented cabbage, but there are over 200 variations. Historically in Korea, entire communities came together for “Kimjang” (kimchi-making), and turned hundreds of cabbage heads into a nutritious food source during long winters and hard times. Before modern refrigeration, Kimchi was fermented and aged in ceramic pots underground. No



matter how you ferment it, kimchi offers the potential health benefits of probiotics, vitamin A, and other good things that come from the veggies inside.



The aunties have been making their own Kimchi (with cabbage, radish, cucumber, and more) since they were young women. At their “How to Make Kimchi” class offered on Saturday, June 17, 2017 at a nearby church in Koreatown, they educated their

community about the nitty gritty of salting the cabbage, preparing the spices, and putting everything together to make delicious traditional, spicy, and cucumber Kimchi recipes. Approximately 50 people attended notebooks in hand, many of them younger Asian Americans excited about the opportunity to learn Kimjang from local elders. The aunties who taught the class--Lydia Kim, Soon Ok Ahn, Youngee Park, and Sung Jung Lee--were each presented with certificates of recognition for their contribution from Los Angeles City Councilmember David Ryu’s office.

