

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 13, 2017

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HISTORIC HMONG REFUGEE EXHIBIT TO BE OPENED IN SACRAMENTO

Hmongstory 40 and the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) Brings an Unique Opportunity to Share Refugee Stories

(Sacramento, CA, February 8, 2017) - Sacramento is a melding of many cultures. It is this blending of our differences that makes the city great. Hmongstory 40 (HS40) and the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) have joined together to highlight one of these cultures. On Saturday, February 11th, 2017, the Hmongstory 40 Exhibit opened its doors to the public at the SCUSD Enrollment Center, located at 5735 47th Avenue.

The Hmong are well known for their customs, traditions, and tapestry arts. However, there has never been a comprehensive exhibit organized to illustrate the broad perspective of the Hmong refugee experience.

"It is an honor to have SCUSD be the Presenting Sponsor for the Hmongstory 40 Exhibit in Sacramento. We have over 2,000 students already scheduled for school tours and encourage all our schools to participate and learn more about the Hmong journey and their contribution to this rich and diverse community." SCUSD Board President, Jay Hansen.

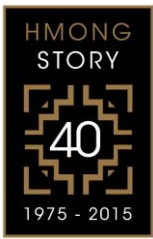
The end of the Vietnam War left millions of Southeast Asians displaced. In South Vietnam alone, the war had created over 6 million refugees from 1965 to 1971. Preceding May 1975, the United States policy for Southeast Asian refugees had been to assist by resettling them in safer areas of their home nations. As the war began to come to a close in early 1975, the State Department prepared an evacuation plan for U.S. forces as well as 18,000 Vietnamese refugees, but it quickly became apparent that this evacuation plan did not meet the incredible need of the refugees. When the South Vietnamese government rapidly deteriorated in April 1975, President Ford authorized an evacuation of up to 200,000 refugees with the signing of the [Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act](#).

The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, passed on May 23, 1975, under President Gerald Ford, was a response to the Fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War. Under this act, approximately 130,000 refugees from South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were allowed to enter the United States under a special status, and the act allotted for special relocation aid and financial assistance.

Three years ago, a group of friends got together to discuss an idea. The year 2015 marked an important milestone for the Hmong community. After fighting and losing the Secret War in Laos - a proxy war to the Vietnam War, crossing the Mekong River to live in squalor and uncertainty in the refugee camps in Thailand, after crossing the Pacific Ocean to a strange land, 40 years of struggling through a wilderness of doubt, this community has begun to realize the American Dream.

HS40 exemplifies the lesson, Bill Francis expresses when he said, "With great tragedy comes great opportunity – a chance for people to be who they always dreamed they could be – magnificent!"

"We truly believe that the greatest gift we can give is the gift of history," said Lar Yang, the Project Director and curator of the exhibit. "We hope that by connecting you to our history, it in turn, helps bridge you to your own history".



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About the Hmongstory 40 Exhibit

The Hmongstory 40 Exhibit is a collaboration between three cities: Fresno, Merced, and Sacramento, and is managed by volunteers. The year 2015 marked 40 years of the Hmong migration from Laos and Thailand to the United States. To commemorate this special anniversary, an exhibition comprised of photographs, stories, fine art, and artifacts was created to showcase the Hmong refugee experience. The exhibit's first showing was in December 2015 in Fresno, California. The exhibit then traveled to Merced in May 2016, and will complete its last exhibition show in Sacramento.

This exhibit was developed to achieve the following objectives:

- To document the Hmong journey from Laos to California
- To celebrate and highlight 40 years of accomplishments by the Hmong in California
- To recognize, honor, and pay tribute to our elders, leaders, and community members
- To connect a new generation of Hmong Americans to the hardships and experiences of refugee settlement
- To share the Hmong experience and culture with the general public
- To encourage future generations to continue the documentation and preservation of cultural and historical artifacts and customs

General Information

Hmongstory 40 Exhibit, SCUSD Enrollment Center, 5735 47th Ave, Sacramento, CA 95824
Special Weekend Programs and Events: 12-5PM
For more information visit: www.hmongstory40.org

Exhibit Hours

Exhibit open from February 11th to February 25th, 2017
Monday: 9AM-5PM
Tuesday thru Friday Private School Tours: 9AM-1PM Public Hours 2PM-5PM
Saturday thru Sunday: 10AM – 6PM

Sponsorship

HS40 is a charitable project under Gifts to Share, Inc. and the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project, and was made possible by the generous support from individual donors, sponsors, and philanthropic partners.



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