

Coyote Ridge Corrections Center Asian and Pacific Islander Inmate Association

Coyote Ridge Corrections Center (CRCC) is one of the largest correctional facilities in the state of Washington with a maximum capacity of 2,500. Located in Connell, CRCC is a medium security prison. Sina Sam and Moana Hafoka, from Washington State University, are two co-sponsors for the Asian & Pacific Islander (API) Group at CRCC and work in partnership with F.I.G.H.T. (Formerly Incarcerated Group Healing Together) to provide assistance and programs for the API group.

Sina and Moana have participated in educational and cultural courses and have led discussions about reentry into society and making a connection and difference in their communities. One of the main goals of this group is to provide cultural enrichment that would allow individuals to feel a sense of cultural pride and connect their ethnic communities. Parole advocacy and reduction of recidivism are main subjects and goals of the group.

The group members come from a diverse range of age, ethnicity, and experience. Some of these ethnicities represented in the API group include: Chamorro, Chinese, Japanese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, Chuuk, Samoan, Tongan, Hawaiian, Filipino, Puerto Rican, and Micronesian. Recently, the group was able to hold a banquet at Coyote Ridge.

The Year of the Monkey banquet hosted by the API group this past July highlighted the different ethnicities with a showcase of dances, singing, speeches, and other performances choreographed and organized by the inmates. More than 150 people attended this event including the families of group members, volunteers, staff, and FIGHT group leadership and members.

The API group, including Sina and Moana, hope to create connections between prisoners and the community and they feel optimistic that these connections can have an impact on interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline that API youth face.

-Written by Moana Hafoka, PhD student

