

A Hopeful Encounter, Inc.

Unity for a Better Tomorrow

BUILDING LEADERSHIP THROUGH HMONG DANCE

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Coach Maxine Xiong in action with her elementary student leadership class

One of A Hopeful Encounter, Inc's most popular leadership programs is their cultural Hmong dance initiative, Ntxhais Txuj Ci Leadership or "NTC," run by Coach Maxine Xiong.

The program teaches leadership and incorporates cultural Hmong dance amongst three levels: beginner elementary, advanced elementary (Paj Cua Nplaim or "PCN"), and competitive high school (Suab Kaj Siab or "SKS").

Although the program has been running for only a short three years, it is a local favorite, having enrolled over 50 young leaders in its most recent recruit.

Research shows the engagement of sociocultural physical activities, such as dancing, contribute positively to youth by creating a sustainable sense of belonging in the community.

Maryann Moua, a mother of three of the students in the beginner elementary group, has been with the program since its inception.

"There's so very few leadership programs for kids at this age, so it's good to have this," Moua says. "Since they've started, they want to learn Hmong. They ask, 'What is this?,' 'What's a xauv?,' 'What does it mean?'"

Coach Xiong inspires not only the youth she works with but the parents, who actively participate and share smiles during the lessons.

Jennie Vang, a mother of three of the students in the beginner elementary and PCN group, shares her enthusiasm of being in an environment filled with like-minded individuals for her daughters and personally, as a parent.

"My favorite part is watching them learn and engage with other kids that look just like them and being able to come here and identify themselves to have a fuller understanding of who they are," Vang says. "I appreciate how supportive these parents are when it comes down to their kids."

Ntxhais Txuj Ci Leadership is in full swing this spring. Keep a lookout for Coach Xiong and our NTC leaders as they share their leadership through community service performances and educating our communities about Hmong culture.

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