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LACDMH Celebrates First Anniversary of “Tea Time,” Serving the AAPI Community
This program, created in the wake of tragedy, provides mental health awareness and support to older adults.

LOS ANGELES — Today, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) is celebrating the first anniversary of its *Tea Time* program in Monterey Park. In just 11 months, *Tea Time's* average attendance grew roughly 260% from an average attendance of 50 people a day in February 2023 to 180 in December 2023. Additionally, the program has referred more than 160 people for an intake appointment with LACDMH services.

The program serves predominantly Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) older adults on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Langley Senior Center (400 W. Emerson Ave.) in Monterey Park. LACDMH staff opens the door to mental health support by having casual conversations over green tea and snacks.

“We are so grateful that *Tea Time* has been a welcome and popular addition to the community who has wholeheartedly embraced this program, which has served as a bridge to offer hope and healing,” said Dr. Lisa H. Wong, LACDMH Director. “*Tea Time* provides a safe and familiar space where anyone can meet and talk without judgment or fear. Programs like this are the types of culturally sensitive approaches we can provide, recognizing the needs of the diverse residents and communities we serve.”

The program was created in response to the tragic Lunar New Year mass shooting in Monterey Park on Jan. 21, 2023, which resulted in 11 deaths and nine injuries. *Tea Time* originally provided a supportive community so individuals could collectively grieve the deadliest mass shooting in Los Angeles County. Now, it is a place to break down barriers and address stigmas in a safe environment.

“Many older adults in the AAPI community have a stigmatized view of mental health,” said Ryan Nam, a clerk with the East San Gabriel Valley Mental Health Center who has been working at *Tea Time* since the beginning of the program. “To discuss the importance of mental health, we share that mental health is about how you feel in your heart — if your heart has depression, sleeplessness, or loneliness — that is all part of our overall mental health and well-being. Through these types of discussions, we have made significant inroads in breaking down barriers.”

Nam, and his *Tea Time* partner, Trung Du, a Community Health Worker also with the East San Gabriel Valley Mental Health Center, have found success by being present to listen twice a week and by speaking with residents in their native languages — the duo is fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and English.

Tea Time will continue in Monterey Park throughout 2024, and similar programs are expected to be announced for other communities throughout Los Angeles County. To learn more or participate in *Tea Time*, contact the East San Gabriel Valley LACDMH office in Covina at (626) 430-2900 or the Langley Senior Center at (626) 307-1395.

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About the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)

As the nation's largest public mental health department, we ensure access to care and treatment for our most vulnerable residents in a region with more than 10 million people. With an annual budget of \$3.8B and 6,900 budgeted positions, LACDMH is dedicated to hope, recovery, and well-being for everyone across the County. For more information, visit dmh.lacounty.gov or follow @LACDMH on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).