

New Films Showcase Community Responses to COVID-19

By Erika Gee, Chinatown CDC Senior Planner

Since the start of the pandemic, CCDC has focused its work on how to best help our community, and as a result, we don't always pause and reflect on our efforts. Some of our newest projects feature partnerships with artists in our community, and are designed to tell our stories and document what sheltering-in-place, healing, and recovery looks like in Chinatown.

We commissioned filmmakers Anson Ho and James Q. Chan to create a short about the efforts of Aaron Lim,



Still from Chan's short on Aaron Lim.

who helped sustain local restaurants by becoming a delivery service. This film is part of Chan's *You Are Here* series, which features shorts that each act as an entry point into a different part of Chinatown, and highlight the inspiring contributions that community members made in shaping their neighborhood and beyond. The films will be available at: <https://www.chinatownshorts.com>.



Logo for the *You Are Here* series, which premiered at Center for Asian American Media's 2020 CAAMFest.

Our CCDC youth also worked with filmmakers Felicia Lowe, David Mai, and Amy Lim to make films through mobile phone video production Zoom

workshops. Their films are part of the collection *Everyday Heroines and Covid19 in Chinatown*, which captures local youth's and residents' experiences with COVID-19, as well as the women that inspire them. You can see the films here: <https://www.lowedownproductions.com/everyday-heroines>.

Women's ESL Program in the Tenderloin Adapts to Virtual Learning

By Kat Cornelius, ESL and Life Skills Program teacher

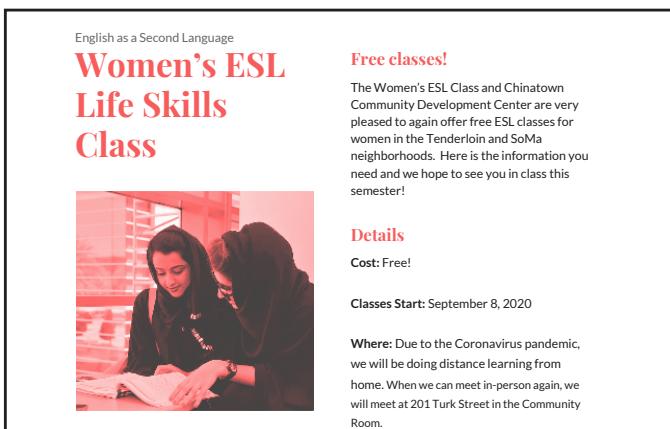
Each week, students log onto Zoom for class. However, the participants in this class aren't school children - they are women in the Tenderloin immigrant community. Before joining these online English classes, many had never used Zoom, or even touched a computer.

Formerly known as the Arab Mothers ESL Program, the Women's ESL and Life Skills Program was started in 2011 to help women in Middle Eastern and North African

immigrant communities gain self-sufficiency through English language education. Today, the program still offers free ESL classes and is open to any woman who wants to join.

Previously, the class was held four times a week in the Community Room of the CCDC-owned and managed site, Tenderloin Family Housing. Due to the pandemic, in-person classes ceased in March. However, students were still eager to learn as a group, so like many academic programs, the Women's ESL and Life Skills Program went online.

Today, students continue to develop their language skills through weekly YouTube tutorials and Zoom meetings, and they communicate with instructors and turn in homework via an app called Remind. Despite the challenges they are facing with distance learning, there have been some unexpected positive benefits. Women who had little exposure to technology are now using computers and other devices regularly in class - additionally, many of the mothers in the program are using these newfound skills to help their children participate in their own online classes.



Poster advertising the class and its new virtual learning structure.