



Karen Jiobu - Franklin County

After retiring from a 30-year career as a laboratory director at Mount Carmel Hospital, Karen Jiobu began her volunteer work toward eliminating Hepatitis B within specific minority demographics, particularly foreign-born Asian and African communities.

Karen collaborated with The Ohio State University Wexner Medical students and the Asian American Community Services (AACS) to start the Hep B Clinic at the Asian Health Initiative Free Clinic. The clinic provides Hepatitis B screenings and follow-ups for uninsured patients. She understands the need to help individuals with this population because of language barriers, which can limit the ability to receive vital screening, testing and treatment. Karen was recognized by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Hepatitis B Foundation for her work toward eliminating Hepatitis B and linkage to care.

Karen is currently the interim executive director at AACS, where she oversees day-to-day operations and the direction of the organization.

Karen also helped the Ohio Asian American Health Coalition

(OAAHC) receive a CDC grant to provide Hepatitis B screenings to foreign-born Asian and African communities. Karen facilitates the OSU Community Health Education medical students and the OSU Asian and Pacific American Medical Students (APAMSA) Hep B train-the-trainer workshops for the community health worker in Asian American communities. She has worked with Columbus Public Health in facilitating a Hep B screening at the annual Somali Health Fair.

Karen holds other leadership positions, including the CLIA Lab director at the OSU free clinic. She was the lead regional coordinator of the Health Through Action Community Partnerships (HTA) grant. This was a 4-year grant to OAAHC from the Asian American Pacific Islander Health Forum (APIAHF) and the Kellogg Foundation. She was the regional director of the midwest region of the National Hepatitis B Task Force and now serves as an advisor.

Karen has received much deserved recognition for her work, including the Hep B United Champion Award in 2013; the Minority Health Community Action Leadership Award from the Ohio Commission on Minority Health in 2014; the Starfish award from the Women Coming Together event; and she was recognized as the Asian Community Leader at the Asian American Commerce Group's 2015 Ohio Asian Awards.

Karen's volunteer efforts extend beyond her medical expertise. She is a long-time volunteer at the Asian Festival, having found-

ed the Asian Festival Dragon Boat Race event in 2010. She has volunteered as the performance chair for 14 years, served as treasurer, and vice-chair on the Asian Festival board, and served on the Asian Festival Health Pavilion by starting Hepatitis B screening in 2006 until 2012.

Karen's life experience includes being one of 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent relocated to an internment camp in the United States during World War II. This experience shaped her outlook and resolve to help others through healthcare. Karen shares her story being an internee with OSU professor Judy Woo for the OSU student oral history project which resulted in the documentary, *Faces of the Past, Voices of the Present*. She has since shared her story through a PowerPoint of her family album along with other historic photos by Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, and Toyo Miyatake (internee at Manzanar camp) at local libraries, the Ohio History Connection staff, local chapter of the National Organization of Women, etc. She continues to share her story so that these events hopefully will not happen again.

Most recently, on August 6, 2021, she was asked to share the story of her mother, who was born in Hiroshima. She had shared this story in 2011 having donated a Yoshino cherry tree in her mother's name, Yoshino Yoshimoto for the Peace Garden at Franklin Park. Between 2018 and 2020 she facilitated the donations of additional cherry trees so that now there are over 100 cherry trees around the lower pond and the upper pond in the Peace Garden. These were all Yoshino cherry trees like those in the Washington DC basin.