

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District

1221 Oak Street, Suite 536, Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510-272-6695 • Fax: 510-271-5151

Contact: Hannah Greene

Office: (510) 272-6768

Cell: (510) 220-3866

Email: hannah.greene@acgov.org

Press Release

For Immediate Release March 27, 2014

Supervisor Keith Carson visits J-Sei Senior Program in Berkeley

Program serves Japanese American seniors in the East Bay



Supervisor Keith Carson gives a presentation on Alameda County services and senior issues at the J-Sei program for seniors in South Berkeley on Wednesday, March 26, 2014.

Berkeley, CA—Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson visited the J-Sei Senior Center for a lunch presentation about local government and the funding climate for senior services on Wednesday, March 26, 2014.

Supervisor Carson shared information about the County safety net system, the network of hospitals and clinics supported by county funding, the role of the Sheriff in coordinating regional disaster preparedness planning and the county's process for planning for demographic shifts.

More than 50% of the county's operating revenue comes from state and federal sources, Supervisor Carson noted, which leads to close cooperation between city, county, state and federal levels of government. In partnership with Congresswoman Barbara Lee and state and city leaders, Supervisor Carson will host a series of town hall forums in April and May to inform residents about the collaboration between all levels of government. The first forum will take place on Wednesday, April 23 in Albany, followed by events in Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland and Piedmont.

J-Sei Executive Director Diane Wong noted that the last fiscal year was tough for senior programs with cuts at the federal level due to sequestration. "The Alameda County Board of Supervisors back filled the cuts that J-Sei was experiencing and we are grateful to the County for helping to keep programs running."

Alameda County's Social Services Agency runs the Area Agency on Aging, which provides services to 52,000 seniors and receives about \$6.0 million annually from federal and state sources. Last year due to sequestration, the agency experienced a 6% cut, which Alameda County was able to back-fill on a one-time basis for programs like J-Sei.

"As Baby Boomers age, the population of seniors who need services is expanding," noted Supervisor Carson. "At the same time, the funding for programs has suffered from years of reductions due to the recession. Although we don't anticipate any cuts this year, the previous reductions in funding have resulted in the reorganization of programs and longer wait times for seniors and their caregivers."

One such program is In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), a program that subsidizes caregivers for seniors and persons with disabilities. A J-Sei program participant asked Supervisor Carson what would happen if the administration of IHSS moves from counties to the state level, a proposal being discussed in Sacramento.

"At the moment, each county runs their program differently," said Supervisor Carson. "The State is now looking at policies determining hourly wages, benefit packages and the level of training and education needed for the workers, some of whom are family members." Although there is uncertainty as to how the program will change, Alameda County projects that the pool of chore providers will remain approximately the same at almost 19,000 workers.

J-Sei serves 300 Japanese Americans and their families each year with bilingual case management, caregiver referrals, a friendly visitor program, transportation services, on-site and home delivered meals, educational classes and day trips. J-Sei also runs a 14-bed licensed care home in Hayward. The program was founded in 1971 and is based in Berkeley. For more information, please visit <http://www.j-sei.org/>.

###

Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods). For more information about District 5 and Supervisor Keith Carson, please call (510) 272-6695 or visit <http://www.acgov.org/board/district5>