

## New Asian Health & Service Center breaks ground

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It is one part of the Lents Town Center revitalization

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The groundbreaking of the Asian Health & Service Center occurred at the end of April, intended to boost the revitalization of the Lents neighborhood.

The 30,000 square-foot facility is located at 9035 S.E. Foster Rd., and more than 200 community members, project leaders, partners and public officials came out to the groundbreaking ceremony.

AHSC is currently located along Southeast 34th and Powell in the Creston-Kenilworth neighborhood, but has outgrown the rented space and is ready for its own building.



O'Neill/Walsh Community Builders and Holst Architecture are the major firms involved in the project.

"This is a long-awaited dream of the organization," said AHSC Executive Director Holden Leung. "This project will allow us to better serve our growing and diversifying community."

AHSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 1983. Currently, it employs 42 bilingual and bicultural employees with more than a \$2 million annual budget. Its mission is to bridge Asian and American culture to build a harmonious community, and its vision is to reduce health inequity and improve healthcare quality for Asian Americans.

From the new Center, AHSC will expand services and programs for a diverse population, including those identifying as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other ethnicities. Approximately 95 percent of AHSC clients do not consider English their primary language, and over 80 percent are low-income.

Lents is a great neighborhood choice for its relocation, because it's among the most diverse in Portland.

The new AHSC building plans include the region's first culturally specific cancer resource and support center for the Asian community, along with a primary care clinic to be located onsite.

Plans also include treatment rooms for behavioral and physical healthcare, a 6,000 square foot multipurpose hall for health education, exercise classes and AHSC's ethnic meal programs for seniors, social gatherings and cultural events.

AHSC began planning for the project in 2014, in collaboration with the Portland Development Commission, who in 2015 announced its investment in the AHSC project.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Today is our first step," said AHSC Board President Dr. Erik Szeto at the groundbreaking. "Our vision is to create unity despite diversity."

Funding for the \$14.8 million project comes from a public-private partnership including the City of Portland and Portland Development Commission.

"The Asian Health & Service Center is an integral part of this evolving vision for Lents Town Center," said PDC Executive Director Kimberly Branam.

FamilyCare also invested in the center's cancer resource and support center, and the Housing Development Center contributed to securing the financing and also to the project development.

Private community contributions make up 41 percent of the funding, 33 percent comes from the PDC and 26 percent from the New Market Tax Credit investment.

AHSC has set a goal of \$6 million of community contributions, with approximately \$4.8 million raised to date. Capital campaign leaders aim to complete the final 20 percent of the campaign by the building grand opening next year.

Completion is slated for spring 2018.

**By Jules Rogers**

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