

Welcome to the live recording of the panel discussion at the 3rd annual Age In - recorded on June 4, 2022 with the topic: 'Elder Wisdom: An Overlooked Resource for Trying Times'.

Panelists are lifelong changemakers from the San Francisco Bay Area who shared lessons learned from a lifelong practice of challenging long held practices and policies for the benefit of the health of our communities.

At Home With Growing Older inspires, educates and connects people across generations and disciplines to re-envision and improve the experiences of later life.

My name is Johfre and I'll just briefly introduce myself, before we start this panel so i'm a sociologist at Stanford i'm a graduate student there and and Susi and I know each other from some work that we've done with an organization called Encore that really celebrates intergenerational connection, and in my research what I study is the way that we order our social world by social categories so whenever we meet a new person we start putting them into buckets we put them into gender categories interracial categories and into age categories and the way that we treat the person we have to admit it depends on how we've placed them and that this these types of interactions just grow and grow and grow, they aggregate to then how we have you know these giant things like residential segregation and is humongous any qualities and things like ages and and racism and sexism and discrimination but also other things that are joyful to it's not all bad, but i'm really interested in the ways that we do that and the consequences of that ordering and, specifically, one of the pieces that I thought, a lot about is age and how we think about people of different ages.

Before we get started, I just want to describe one concept from my research that I found very helpful in bringing to conversations like this which starts from the observation that everybody here is going to be familiar with, which is that people can be old and young, in many different ways. So people can be chronologically old or young but there's so many other ways to be old and young, you know there's things we think about bodies, there's things we think about minds, there's things we think about the way that we're interacting and institutions where you are in your career. All these things, ways that we place people as old or young that are separate from just chronology and I found this helpful concept, because it makes me think about how age itself is really about more than just chronology and I think this is very valuable and we're thinking about how people of different ages and different generations are interacting and how you can sort or find similarities and differences between people who have different chronological ages that may be similar across other dimensions.

So that's a very brief thing about my research but I'm so excited to be moderating this panel, I feel so honored to be at the same table as these three remarkable women. And I hope you have looked at the program book for a little bit more about some of their accomplishments but just very briefly I'll introduce them so on the right, we have Amy Meyer who created the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, so you can thank her for Point Reyes and Lands End and more.

Next, we have Jennie Chin Hansen, who is the leader of California and National policy efforts to improve care for older adults and she's the past President of AARP and also the CEO of the American Geriatrics Society. And then next to me, we have Sandy Mori who's a social justice activist and Community leader and nonprofit creator dedicated to improving the well-being of Japanese American Communities in the Bay Area.

And so, one of the themes of our day today is about relationships and community and the first question I'd like to hear all of your thoughts on. We can start with Amy and then go this way, whether you could share a memory of a time that you found strength in Community and what that Community looked like.

**Could you share a memory of a time that you found strength in community and what that community looked like?**

AMY MEYER

The Community as a community in San Francisco which has a long history since 1870 really of caring for and protecting it's gorgeous environment and whenever I had to bring people into the project of getting the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, GGNRA as we call it. People came to help, to help because they believe in it.

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

Sure, thank you, I have two quick memories, one is when I was in college. I grew up in Boston Boston's Chinatown, to be specific but I went to a Jesuit School for college, and it was during the time I was in school that some of the incredible violence occurred. And I was there at school, when Martin Luther King was assassinated. And so the school just automatically mobilized and we all marched from our campus into downtown Boston it was just one of those moments I never been among such a large protest or movement like that, and I just was literally lifted, as well as physically impressed with the fact that we all came together, and this was a traditionally Irish catholic school and it was just amazing to see everybody, just so hurt, so incensed together in terms of that period of history.

SANDY MORI

In the Japanese American Community there are only three Japan towns in America here in San Francisco in LA and San Jose and we, together, as a community try to maintain and preserve and promote economic development and promote culture and heritage. And it is a sense of community based on our heritage, at the same time, moving forward and looking at the next generations, the next three or four generations. We have a lot of young people who are biracial tri-racial and that is part of assimilation, but what we try to do is to teach each child the heritage that they have that they're proud of. One, two or three heritages because I think this

is the way of the world and we feel strongly that younger people have got to know the history, but then moving forward, you can do a lot of things with many diverse communities.

SASHA JOHFRE

My next question is about thinking about sort of the cycles of social progress and sometimes it feels like we're not making progress towards social justice and I know that the same cultural conversations come up again and again, sometimes for decades or centuries, whether it's about abortion or gun control or racial exclusion environmental safety, etc. but it's also so important to recognize and celebrate the progress that we have made and I'm wondering for each of the three of you what is something in our world that you have seen change for the better. We could go in the same order so Amy if you want to start.

**What is something in our world that you have seen change for the better?**

AMY MEYER

What I have seen over working in this field for 50 years has been so it started high it's gotten higher an awareness of how very much our world has to be thought of in a sense of being healthy and this came from our chairman, long deceased Edgar Weber, who was a doctor and a former President of the Sierra Club, where he thought of the world as something that ought to be kept in good health. And this idea has become part of our everyday conversation partly that we've been forced into by climate change and the effects that ripple through every piece of land and every bit of air we breathe through the different seasons of the year. So what I see is this awareness starting high in the Bay Area and growing higher and getting better and many parts of the country.

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

When it comes to thinking about the progress that we've made. The topic areas that I've ended up with, actually my studies in graduate school were on adolescent health but I have been obviously in the field of aging and geriatrics almost all my career. The recognition of humanism and dignity at that time in my public health work that led me to think about older individuals. So when you carry the torch for older people, one of the major isms that we still have now and more. I realized two things, one that the desire to learn about the life course was not as enthusiastically embraced 50 years ago. But as people age, as our legislators age, as we have family caregiving responsibilities, we recognize that the factor of dementia if we live so long and to be lucky that over 85 easily 40% of us will be touched by this. So the content of age and health has now taken greater interest because it affects not just policy, but our time, our money, our hopes and wishes for the future. So that there's been a change and it's because people have had that personal experiential component. So then I think our hearts are more open to this but what's interesting I think our mindsets, our frameworks are still tight for this, and part of it is the sense of fear of what that means, and a lot of the stigma that actually comes with it. So the fact that Dr Chodos in San Francisco is doing the 80 over 80. The ability to not, I'm going to say a word that may be sensitive, infantilize this, but to recognize it with the fullness and humanism

and the texture of what we have. I think there is slow progress and I think it's beginning to grow, but it takes all of us to do that work and be careful of the words we use and just listen to ourselves choose the words that we do so that kind of awareness is something I say we made some progress with.

SANDY MORI

So when it comes to progress because I spent most of my adult career life in the field of aging. I do see the increase of alternatives as we age, whether you want to age in place in your own home in your apartment, whether you want to be in a facility and have support services there. Whether you want to be in a life care facility, where you are taken care of the rest of your life. There are different options that you could look at, and obviously the key factor here is the cost. And now, in our society, the cost is pretty exorbitant if you go into any of these facilities, and so I think that's going to be a challenge for the future, because not everybody can afford to be in those facilities, where the cost is high especially if it's a life care facility, where you're taking care for the rest of your life. So I think the whole issue of aging in place, aging in your own apartment, aging in your own home, especially if you can afford to keep your home and see this issue all has to do with economics. And there are so many seniors who are at poverty level literally at poverty level and our country has to deal with this issue, because I think that we have so many elected officials who may be older, but they don't have to worry about their income they don't have to worry about healthcare access so I do feel that our country as a nation needs to pay more attention to have a little bit more equity here. This has got to be. It's all this money in it. And so it's easy to say, but very difficult policy changes that have to take place. We've got to continue to advocate for these kinds of things because it's going to be hard and not going to be easy and I just see that this is a huge challenge for the future of our country.

SASHA JOHFRE

Thank you all three for that I feel like, I love that all of you have so much clarity about sort of what has changed, and what needs to change and be able to see both, bigger cultural pieces, but also the very practical sort of what you know what actually is the next step, I so appreciate that. I'm trying to learn that, as a sociologist, but I feel like I should just talk with the three of you more. Okay, so next, I want to actually ask Sandy a question, which is when you were much younger, how did you think about the elders around you in your community and what lessons can people, young or old take from your experience with intergenerational connection or mis-connection.

**When you were much younger, how did you think about the elders around you in your community and what lessons can people, young or old, take from your experience with intergenerational connection or mis-connection?**

SANDY MORI

Well, when I was younger my grandparents lived with me when I was a child, and so I was very close to my grandparents and therefore that's one of the impetus that led me to found an organization that creates service capacity to seniors. And so the word Kimochi in Japanese means 'feelings' which is feelings between grandparents and grandchildren or feelings between

people in general, but that word is significant because it really is the philosophy that has to happen within the organization from the top down. From top, whether it be the Board of Directors, Executive Director, administrative staff, direct service staff that has to be in all levels of the organization, that feeling. And it is hard because it's a philosophy that is part of a value system that you have to instill at a younger age. And so what we've tried to do and it's hard! You have to teach it at a very early age when children are young. And as they get older they see the value of taking care of their elderly, being sure that their grandparents and eventually their parents are going to be taken care of. And I see this value becoming less. It is given less attention to. So here again this is part of our society's way of looking at aging. And I think all the different philosophies about changing the way we look at aging. It is all very important and I think, as we move forward, we have to continue to make sure that everybody can talk about it. It's not easy to talk about aging. A lot of people don't want to talk about the negative effects themselves because everyone gets older. We are all getting older. But it's important to have discussions with people within your family within your community of all ages. And I think that the whole idea of getting older is scary for some people. And so we should make it so that it's not scary so that people know there's a support system and a community around them that will give them the support as they continue to age.

SASHA JOHFRE

Thank you, Sandy. I love that, especially given my own research on sort of the cultural meanings of age and how we think about age as being such an important piece of the way that we act towards people of different ages. So thank you for that.

Okay Jennie I have a question for you now, which is there are so many ways for progress to happen, and what are some of the avenues that you have found to be particularly impactful for change and also meaningful to you as a person.

**There are so many ways for progress to happen, and what are some of the avenues that you have found to be particularly impactful for change and also meaningful to you as a person?**

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

There are so many different ways to engage, but I think my work history conveys this understanding that change in policy is really important. And the policy of poverty, for example, making sure that people have a living wage now, but then just the living amount that is important to have a dignified life at any age. So the sense of community is important. But policy is very powerful. But policy by itself if it's not implemented doesn't mean a whole lot, so it really takes the vision and then the hard work of thinking, what would be good, making sure people that have income, making sure there are programs and money that follow that. And then a way to implement that program. So it's not just doing great work in the community. We touch certain lives. But then we know that the universal issue is bigger. And so, in some ways that's how I started with community work. And then you realize this is not an unusual situation that people needed good care as they got more frail. And then, you start looking at where the decisions come from. So you go from the community level to policy and then for those who make policy making sure they understand that to pull that stuff off you really need a whole different, you have

a team of people and infrastructure and the sustainability to this. So advocacy is so crucial, but advocacy is only part of the ecosystem of making things happen so that it touches real lives.

SASHA JOHFRE

Thank you, Jennie. Next I have a question for Amy. So part of your work has included a focus on equity and access and that is sort of celebrating and prioritizing access to services or places and wellbeing for people of different ages, different genders, different abilities, etc. Could you say more about why this is an important goal for you, in the context that you've worked in?

**Part of your work has included a focus on equity and access, celebrating and prioritizing access to services or places and wellbeing for people of different ages, different genders, different abilities, etc. Could you say more about why this is an important goal for you, in the context that you've worked in?**

AMY MEYER

This is a very important context because we started off as a group of you know thirty, forty people. And over time, 50 years, what I've realized is, we don't carry this down to the next generation. And in the words of an activist from Chinatown years ago, she said, if you don't reach us in our, in our places and bring us into what you're doing, the next generation will pave over Yosemite. So this has been something that has been growing. First of all, we had to advocate. Then we had to get legislation, and then we had to implement the legislation. All right, this has gone on for a number of years. But what we have is programs that are done by the National Park Service by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, by the park conservancy and then organizations like anything from the Sierra Club to California Native Plant Society, or whatever to engage people in becoming stakeholders in the future of this park. Because it's our 50th anniversary this year we are focusing on making sure that the staff people who have come in, you know, over the last 50 years. There are only three of us left from the original group that worked on this park. One is a long-standing park service employee. If any of you know the park her name is Mia Monroe. We have Becky Evans from the Sierra Club and me. And that's it - we are there. The others have either moved or died. And so what we're trying to do is bring this to the younger people. In 2006 I wrote a book about this called 'New Guardians for the Golden Gate'. The old guardians were the army. The new guardians are the park service. The book just, most inconveniently went out of print. And it is a UC Press book and if you're interested, you should try Amazon. The idea is that the story of our campaign needed to be told, so that the next generation and generations could make use of it. And so, this is the kind of carry through, to say nothing of the programs of the Presidio Trust and the Park's Conservancy that all reach to everybody across the City. Whether through the San Francisco public library or programs at different neighborhoods or bringing the neighborhoods into the parks, so that young people will become a part of. And have a care and a concern that what they see will last.

SASHA JOHFRE

Thank you Amy. I actually want to follow up on something you were just talking about and curious to hear all the panelists' thoughts on that. Which is really about the role of intergenerational connection within social movements. Specifically what older activists and younger activists might be able to bring to the table and learn from each other and all of you have both been activists, for many, many years have seen it from different sides of different ages and also worked with people of different ages so I'm really curious to hear all of your thoughts.

**What might older activists and younger activists bring to the table and learn from each other?**

We are good to start in any order. Whoever has thoughts on that first.

SANDY MORI

Well, in fact, you know it's interesting that you raised that, because this is something that we're dealing with right now. In today's age with the younger generation understanding, One the younger generation has to know the history. They have to have history first. Learn what happened in the past. But with that, that will then help them to understand what needs to be done in the future. And you know that concept is not something that necessarily young people accept readily. Because there's a certain resistance about well, you know I already know, I am smart enough to know. So there's an attitude thing you know. So we have to try to break through that attitude and really, in my opinion, we have to gain their trust. Because they are young and they're also impatient and they don't want to work hard, necessarily, and they don't want to struggle. Well I am sorry, you got to do all that to get things done. It does not take just overnight to get things done. And you have to be willing to put the time in. You know you can't do it, you know, like within a weekend or two. It is next year, you know, not just short term. But it's a very hard concept to try to put in their minds, and for them to embrace it. And we got to do it in a way that's not talking down to them, or like lecturing them or this kind of negative feeling that they get or will interpret. So we have to figure out a way, a technique to do that. And that is what we work on. Because to me it's a trust issue. We have to gain their trust. At the same time in order to gain their trust for them to listen to us and not look at it like you're scolded or they're being chastised. So it takes time and we just got to continue to work on it.

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

I'd like to build on Sandy's comment about trust, and I think I would like to take it with a slightly different emphasis. I think it's about building relationships first. So I think spending time together to get to know one another as people. How we show up as people and what's exciting in our lives, of concern in our lives. To have conversations over time. To your point it's not like dedicating two weekends, a month, a year to do this. So it really speaks to a tough time contextually for us because everything is fast, you know and all of us, I mean I won't claim that for all you but you fall into it, because texting, for example, everything is so quick and trust takes time, so we have a bit of a challenge here. How do we take the effort and have structures to spend time together so that we're not about the task we're about the person. So build the

personhood relationship first. And I am being taught about that right now. I'm in the midst of being in a mentor program which allows me to work with somebody who's interested in the field of aging. And so often things that I have seen when they set up mentorship programs that kind of what I call 'drive by' mentorship. So, it's like you do it. We will have three sessions for you over the next six months, and all this and I think we all know, principally that stuff doesn't really work. So, I am now part of a designed program like by some rather young innovators, who have developed the mentorship program where it's over the course of four months, but every single week. And the instructions were, we were not to talk about work, the first four sessions of our time together. So, we got to know each other about family, backgrounds, you know things that were challenging. She happens to be somebody whose mother was in an internment camp, and so this whole thing of just understanding ourselves. And so we've now started our first session, where we talked about career, you know, content and stuff and I get to feel how different that is and I have gotten to know her as an individual and likewise. And so I just think we just need a different model. And it's not these quick sessions and it's not just learning about stuff. It's really being a person together. And I can remember having somebody who mentored me not by intention but, by default. She was retiring from a faculty we were both on. And surprise, surprise she's the only person focused on geriatrics and gerontology. Nobody else in the faculty. I was in community and public health. So at least I touched aging. So she said "Jennie you are in!" She goes you're taking over a I retire. And so what she did is give me some tips along the way. I was young and impatient then. I hated committee meetings. I just thought they were boring. And they were boring. But it was one of those things, I said, I wish I could just tell them what I think. And she said no, because you don't have that privilege yet. And, mind you, this was like 45 years ago and I think a lot of people speak up much more assertively today but she said you know there's a time cycle here, and you can do that when you're about my age. But you know, I was like 28 at the time, and she said you don't have that privilege yet and you haven't earned it. And so I remember she taught me over time. And that's frankly the reason I am in aging and geriatrics. But I just think it is about building relationships and spending more time at that, even in this fast moving world.

AMY MEYER

I am the luckiest person. About two months ago my oldest granddaughter, 27 said, "Grandma, can I live with you?" And I am very close to my family. They live within blocks of me and the outer Richmond of San Francisco but they live, you know, separately. And she said, "it's a little bit too much you know watching me, and you know it's not quite enough room at home." So, and the homes are roomy, that is not the problem. She moved in with her dog and it has been a marvelous experience so far. She watches me, she learns, she listens. I try not to put more than one item a day in front of her, preferably not more than one every three days like something like you might be interested in this newspaper article or very hands off, which is what she needed. But at the same time, I could be an example for her. Because you know I get up at you know seven every morning and I have a day that's very ordered and I have enormous amounts of things to do with the park, but also as a person who's trying to retire a little bit I've gone back to what I did originally which is artwork and I do a lot of collages and drawings. And so she watches, listens and then she comes to me and says, "Grandma, it's time for your walk". And she puts a leash on her dog. I don't require one! We go out and we talk. She's very much as is her father, particularly into plants and she's planting my house. It's okay, I may not be able to see



the trees across the street in a while. But anyway, it is very close. And I know that I will have some of this with her younger sister, differently. She is quite different and then that 16 year old boy who knows everything probably takes a while. But you know, he did interview me and he watches and he listens. So it's a matter of very tight closeness.

SASHA JOHFRE

I love all those stories. You know a lot about what you are each talking about. It fits with the research on basically, that if we can understand people as people beyond just the social categories that we put them in you know, then we have more information to act upon. So it really makes sense that these close connections are you know can really be what drives really meaningful conversations. Then I have a somewhat big picture question for each of you which was actually a question that actually, Jennie you inspired me for that and I'm curious about all of your thoughts on. Which is that everybody has moments in their lives, where they face potential crossroads. And you can't know what's going to happen when you're making the decision. And I'm curious if you could go back to talk to yourself in the past, while you're making such an important decision, what decision would you go to, what age would you go back to talk to and what would you say?

**Everybody has moments in their lives, where they face potential crossroads. If you could go back to talking to yourself in the past, while you're making such an important decision, what decision would you go to, what age would you go back to talk to and what would you say?**

Sandy, do you want to start with your thoughts on this?

SANDY MORI

Well let's see, I guess, in terms of that particular question. There is a point now where, you see I got my degree at UC Davis. I got my degree in nutrition and dietetics, so I was a dietitian for at least 15 years working in hospitals as a therapeutic and administrative dietitian working you know, in a healthcare facility. But at a certain point, during that time I was doing that work I was also volunteering in my own community and that is when I helped co-found Kimochi, which is a community-based organization serving seniors creating a continuum of care of services for people who are well and healthy and independent, to the point where they need supervision and need support. So, at that point, I decided to leave working for institutions and working in the community and that's when we founded Kimochi. So that particular point in time, was to me a change in where I was going to earn a living. So when you work in and volunteer in the nonprofit field it is absolutely less income compared to working in a hospital. But I decided to do that because I was able to, I was independent, I was not married, so I was independent enough to be able to do that, so I made that decision and have never regretted it. But at the same time, a lot of people can't necessarily do that. So because you have to make a living. So here again it comes down to money. I hate to keep bringing this up folks. But it is a reality but anyway; I just know that that particular decision was something that I will always be grateful that I did make that decision. And then later in time I had a chance to have an opportunity to go work for the City. So I had that opportunity for about 15 years to do that, that gave me an opportunity to

understand how the City works and utilize that information how the City works to bring it back to the community, because I always believe that whatever skills and wisdom, that you could learn in doing things that you bring it back to your community so that it can drive. So I guess that is about all.

#### JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

My fork in life that I recall is that I alluded to the fact that I was on a faculty. I am a nurse by background, on the faculty of the School of Nursing. And this opportunity to do something very different to come up here to San Francisco was afforded an option of doing research that was in San Diego where we were living. At that time I think I was 28 or 29 or excuse me maybe 31 or 32. I was a widow, and the whole question of staying in academia or going to the unknown at that time. And I, as you picked up, I was really bored with the whole issue of community work and stuff. And it was right around the time that students were also very fixated on their grades. So I have students who would argue with me over two points as to whether or not they got a certain score and so that just didn't do it for me. So this whole idea of taking a risk of the unknown and I had colleagues, I had a tenure track position so that's something that's a little hard to come by and especially at that time I only still had only a master's degree. And so it was either the unknown, which is coming up here to San Francisco to do some research at OnLok senior health services in San Francisco or to stay in this faculty position where I get my summers off, I had a little child and all this and so I just listened to my gut, Sandy as you said. I just needed something that had some more action and being in academia just was not set up at the time for that kind of thing. So I basically got a U-Haul truck and took my four year old and here we tramped up to San Francisco and the rest is history. I think it's taking a risk and jumping into the abyss and the same thing here and I left OnLok after almost 25 years. People were surprised I left. They thought that I would be there forever. But once again I knew that I was restless. And my dear husband who is in the audience here. I shared with him a couple of years before I left, I said, you know something's going on inside, I just don't know what it is. But I don't think that I am going to be staying for a long time. So when I jumped and left, I had nothing. And so this was one of the things that he rode with me and so We will do okay. But the ability to take chances over something that your own soul is telling you and it's like listening to that. And sometimes it's not like a two year plan, five year plan. No, you know I'm a person who jumps. So anyway, but that's what happened.

#### AMY MEYER

I have to go back to when I graduated from college and said to my father, I want to go to Medical School or Law School, Architectural School. I don't even care which one and he said oh no, you can become a secretary. And I mean, I had graduated from Oberlin with honors and I thought this was a terrible idea and I left home. I married a psychiatrist. I had the opportunity to have some good, let's call it psychoanalytic assistance to get through the jump I was making. And my husband was drafted and we came out here. I would add that of the two doctors who were drafted with him, one was sent to Wichita Falls, Texas, and one was sent to Biloxi, Mississippi. We were sent here. If any of you come from there, I apologize. We were sent here and I could not believe

how beautiful this place was, and I also could not believe, how the women here had a freedom to do things that, from my community in Brooklyn, no thanks, we just could not. And so I came out here, and did this, became a teacher and eventually found for a variety of reasons ways into the work I was doing 50 years but the big thing was to say, “You are not going to put me down”.

SASHA JOHFRE

I love all of that as a young person. I find it very useful. I love the theme of jumps all of you just brought up these big jumps in life and how they were all also informed by the connections you've had with other people and the responsibilities you had and sort of how to make those decisions together. So I was thinking about decisions in my own life, so this was very helpful. Okay, so the next question I would love to hear everybody's thoughts on again is that from your perspective, what is something that's keeping people, for example, of different generations, races or genders apart and is there a way to take away that barrier and maybe this is an activism, but also even more broadly.

**What is something that's keeping people, for example, of different generations, races or genders apart and is there a way to take away that barrier?**

We can go in any order again.

SANDY MORI

Well, I always believe in, and will continue to believe that communication is the key to understanding. That people don't communicate with each other, I don't care what background you have, I don't care what ethnicity you have, I don't care what economic status you have. You have to communicate. And it's hard to talk about difficult subjects, but you know it's okay and it's okay to disagree. It is okay to disagree. Sometimes people don't want to get into an uncomfortable conversation, because they have to disagree. It's okay. But then from there, we have to figure out, there may be some compromises and not everybody gets what they want in terms of their argument but to me communication is really, and as we get older that is even more important and when a younger person also that needs to be emphasized to them too. You need to talk with your peers, need to talk with your elders, you just need to have a conversation. So, I think communication in our society is really needed, and I think communication can help do some healing and I, I do think that people don't want to talk about difficult subjects.

I still believe that racism, sexism and ageism is alive and well in our country, and you know we have to admit it. A lot of people don't want to admit that these three things are still around. But we have to work on it in order to take it away or to get rid of it. We will not get rid of it totally, but we need to talk about it. The more people communicate, I always believe will help society.

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

Could you rephrase your question, or just say it again? I got so absorbed in Sandy's response.

SASHA JOHFRE

I understand. What barriers do you see between people and how can we dismantle them?

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

The isms that Sandy brought up I think are so prevalent now. In some ways I think we've all seen there's been some permission to unleash this a little bit more for that we have seen manifest, but we also know that that's always been there. And so, for any of us in any of the categories, we happen to be in right now that people designate we've all felt some of this we felt, whether it's formal aggression, or whether it's been micro aggressions, so I think back to all these isms. Part of it is we've all been at the receiving end of it, and maybe we've also been at the giving end of it. But the ability to think when you take steps to do something about it, is kind of forks in the road right now and those of us who made it this far, we have been recipients of these isms quite a bit. My being an Asian female. I didn't share that when I was at college, I was the only female, only Asian in the entire campus upper, lower and so at that point, I was probably more of a curiosity, rather than subject to the ISM directly. But there's just an awareness. Each one of us has antenna, not that we wear chips on our shoulders, but we just are aware that these things happen, whether we are women in certain circumstances, whether it's the color of our skin, whether it's our age, and I can still remember being diverted once. It was my first academic position. I was under 30 and I went into a line to get my parking sticker and the person behind the window said no, you don't belong in this line, you need to go to the student line I said, 'I am faculty!' But there's all kinds of things like you just have to kind of understand and experience, but how we choose to respond to it and the timing of it, the context of it is something that is something of a discernment that we all start to learn as to when you choose your battles, or you choose your actions and sometimes you just deal with it, and I think a lot of us have dealt with it. But part of it is not to let them accumulate so much that it creates a self-doubt rather than recognizing how I have dealt with it, it is just not worth it. You know, it's just there. And you realize everybody's going through some of this stuff so how much do you react to is a matter of timing and choice and the degree of what that experience might be.

AMY MEYER

I have already told you something of my background and so let's just say that I came from a patriarchal home, where I was told what I was supposed to think or what I was supposed to do and it didn't sit well with me. And so, then I married a psychiatrist and if there's anything that I learned from George, it was that he taught me to listen to my children. And he listened and they would talk. He would respond. And as this I just simply, I had to sort of turn over a week and start again. But when I went to advocacy which was in my mid 30s.

The biggest thing that an advocate can do for herself on the cause is to listen. And so, when people came. I'm thinking of a particular park in San Francisco, Sutro Heights Park as part of the GGNRA and to listen to what the people in that neighborhood are saying, because they have some problems up there, particularly brought on by the pandemic, people camping across the street from their houses. That if I listen and we work with park service people and neighbors and

we're working out a program I mean the US park police helped to deal with the campers and drugs and other things that turned up in this rather small but very nice park and, but when I listened to the neighbors and you know use their ideas that's been, how I've been working for 50 years is in developing a park that started in San Francisco nucleus, quickly jumped into Marin and went like this. And people coming to me with you know, could we do this, how do we do this, you know that listening, what do you want, what are you trying to accomplish and then being able to bounce back at them, okay, how would you go about this how can I help you? And this is what makes my work possible.

SASHA JOHFRE

I hope everyone was taking notes about that because we now have a to-do list of what to do next, both in terms of listening and adapting and being accountable to our actions, including aggression and then just being better communicators. I think those are great, great things for us all to keep in mind. So I think we have time for one more question. Again, I'm curious to hear all of your thoughts about. So the three of you have all made remarkable impacts on the world through your advocacy and leadership and activism, and of all that you've done and accomplished what are you most proud of?

**Of all that you've done and accomplished, what are you most proud of?**

Sandy, maybe we could start with you again.

SANDY MORI

I guess when it comes to policy change in terms of working with the whole senior community and adults with disability community to have a ballot initiative put on to San Francisco ballot and get it approved by the voters by over 70%. That was something that we're really proud of. And two of my dear friends, Tony and Maria, who are here today. They helped make that happen.

JENNIE CHIN HANSEN

I think it's been nearly 25 years that I spent with the organization OnLok Senior Health Services in San Francisco which really started from a community perspective of need and assessment and listening to what was important to have in a community for a healthy community and having a chance to operate and lead the operations itself. But my parents benefited from it as well. My parents were immigrants, and they were not not wealthy whatsoever, and the fact that the work that I was doing was something that they benefited from as well as the community as well as my brother. My brother had early Parkinson's and ended up being in our program. But to have this program that starts grounded in the community, moving to say, this shouldn't be just in one place. Everybody faces this kind of issue. This is universal. And, in general, this was for low-income populations. But middle income, high income, people travel this journey. And so the question of replicating it and so having a chance to test it out in communities. Other communities of color you know in South Carolina, in El Paso Texas and others. To have it start that way and become a federal law that now operates, the program operates in 30, 31 states and to realize that something

could start from the community and change policy and affect so many people beyond the original population, ourselves. To realize this is a universal life experience for people who have challenge and to have a hand in that, and then to benefit it as a daughter, as a sister and to learn and to be exposed to so much. The work that was subsequent to OnLok to me, would not have happened, had I not had this experience. So I'm very proud of it and I'm grateful for it.

AMY MEYER

I have been very lucky to be able to work in a field that feels a lot like Jennie's in the sense of expanding. After all, the National Park system is more than 420 units across the entire country and so I became part of that and I learned about legislation, how we get legislation and how legislation is passed through. In this case not only locally, it has to be supported but also then has to get the Congressmen or Senators to take it through and have it be signed into law by the President, you know. But to have that be a living part of what I do, and then to be able to show that to others. We are celebrating our 50th anniversary as I've said, and one of the other things and I'm actually getting some ideas from this conversation. How to be able to imbue the people who are coming up in behind and the young people to know the powers of this democracy and when it's working right how it gets things done, I mean we had a totally bipartisan experience. Phil Burton was a wild democrat Eastern part of San Francisco. Bill Maynard was a gentlemanly republican from the Western part of San Francisco and they carried the bills for this and then this was picked up by a few different senators, who came into office and notably, Alan Cranston. And the idea that the American democracy works and can work and that you've got to do everything you can to make it work in order to get done all the things that we have talked about.

SASHA JOHFRE

Thank you all three of you for sharing things that you're proud of, and all the other pieces of wisdom that you shared. I have already learned so much from our conversation here, and I am also looking to conversations going forward and learning from everybody else here as well. I think everybody in this room has perspectives to share, wisdom to share, and different you know different experiences of life that they're coming to this space with. But so I'm really looking forward to learning from everybody here, but before that let's give it up, one more time for our amazing, amazing speakers.

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