

Survivor urges cooperation, unity in fight against COVID-19

By Evangeline Cafe
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

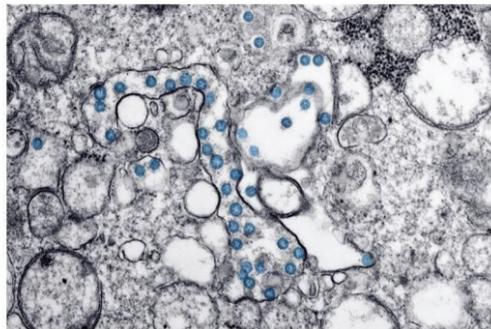
Most heroes of the pandemic aren't behind a podium. They're in battle behind the scenes—their frustrations and anxieties masked by a uniform. Facing shortages of equipment, supplies, and staff, health care workers are feeling the weight of the outbreak on their shoulders.

"Everyone on the front lines are burnt out in a magnitude of ways," said emergency room technician Missy Cruz. "Some of the staff are working 14- and even 16-hour days to try and help combat this virus," she said.

Cruz, 32, is a survivor. She is also among a legion of health care workers trying to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, or SARS-CoV-2. The virus causes COVID-19, an acute respiratory disease that has led to tens of thousands of deaths globally and more than 120 deaths in Washington state—numbers that are only expected



E.R. technician Missy Cruz, who recovered from COVID-19, is rejoining efforts to contain the outbreak. (Photo courtesy: Missy Cruz).



A transmission electron microscopic image shows an isolate from the first confirmed U.S. case of COVID-19. The spherical viral particles, colored blue, contain cross-sections through the viral genome, seen as black dots. (Photo courtesy: CDC/Hannah A Bullock, Azaibi Tamin).

to climb.

Although the majority of those infected recover, Cruz understands the toll that the disease can take on even a young, healthy individual.

"I was utterly miserable. The fevers and body aches were the worst for me," she said. Cruz experienced high fevers, body aches, headaches, deep

chest coughs, and shortness of breath. Her fevers ranged between 101.5 and 103.7 degrees Fahrenheit for eight straight days.

"I could not regulate my fever. When I tried to take medication away, my fever would shoot back up," she

see **SURVIVOR** on 15

Relief for ID restaurants, small businesses

What started out as a \$100,000 donation from Vulcan has now turned into the CID Restaurants and other Small Businesses Relief Fund. The International district (ID) is home to over 400 small businesses, including 140 restaurants.

Managed and disbursed by the Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area, Friends of Little Saigon, and the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda), the fund will distribute money directly to small businesses in the ID to help them mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This initial contribution will focus on restaurants, which have seen a severe decline in business since early February. Additional donations raised by this fund will be distributed directly to small businesses.

SCIDpda will act as a fiscal sponsor for this

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Lt. Governor Habib giving up office, joining the Jesuits



Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib

OLYMPIA — Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib announced on March 19 that he will not seek re-election, and will instead join the Jesuits, a religious order of the Catholic Church known formally as the Society of Jesus.

"This decision follows two years of careful and prayerful discernment. But since that process has been almost entirely private, I realize that this will come as a major surprise to my constituents and supporters," Habib said in a statement.

Gov. Jay Inslee said that while the news was unexpected, "anyone who knows Cyrus is not surprised by his commitment to faith. I have no doubt his future in the Jesuit priesthood will bring much good to a world that needs it right now."

The son of Iranian immigrants, Habib is the first and only Iranian American elected to statewide

see **HABIB** on 13

Inslee announces "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order

On March 24, Gov. Jay Inslee signed a statewide order that requires everyone in the state to stay home. The order will last for two weeks and could be extended. This Stay Home, Stay Healthy order is similar to orders that other governors, in places such as California and New York, issued last week.

This proclamation will:

- Require every Washingtonian to stay home unless they need to pursue an essential activity.
- Ban all gatherings for social, spiritual, and recreational purposes.

see **STAY HOME** on 15



Gov. Jay Inslee

Photo from WA State Governor's Office



#WashTheHate



Actor Tzi Ma washes his hands while sending out a message on Twitter as part of #WashTheHate campaign.

#WashTheHate campaign combats racism against AAPIs spurred by the coronavirus

By Kai Curry
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

The reports are out there. A student in Singapore beaten. A Vietnamese curator excluded from an art event in London. In New York, an Asian sprayed with air freshener. Another kicked in the back. Another punched

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SURVIVOR from 1

said. An X-ray came back negative for pneumonia and Cruz was able to self-isolate for two weeks at home.

It is believed that Cruz contracted the virus from a patient on Feb. 21, eight days before Public Health - Seattle & King County announced the first known death in the United States of an individual with COVID-19, although testing later indicated that two individuals had already died on Feb. 26. Cruz believes that she became infected after helping a patient who came to the E.R. for symptoms unrelated to the disease.

“The day I contracted COVID-19 was like any other day for us in the E.R.; it was busy. COVID-19 was not classified as a pandemic yet and was still in its infancy here in the U.S.,” she said. “This patient did not have any recent travels outside of the country and denied being in contact with any individual that could have been positive.

“Four days after my contact with the

patient, I started to feel sick initially with some mild symptoms. On the first day, I had a mild cough that went away within a day. Throughout the week, I started to feel headaches and body aches,” said Cruz. “It was at the end of that week I was informed that I was in contact with a patient who tested positive for the virus. The following day, I was tested by the Centers for Disease and Control and within 24 hours, I was informed that I, too, tested positive for COVID-19.”

Health care workers and the government are begging the public to do their part in helping flatten the curve of the pandemic.

On Mar. 23, Gov. Jay Inslee announced a statewide “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order. The order requires Washingtonians to stay home except to pursue essential activities. The order bans social, spiritual, and recreational gatherings, and closes all businesses except for those deemed essential.

“The less time we spend in public, the more lives we will save,” Inslee said in a televised announcement.

“Social distancing is so important right now because this virus is easily transmittable from person to person,” said Cruz. “If people continue to abuse social distancing, the frontline health care workers will never be given a chance to catch up with this virus. We will continue to overload the hospitals and resources we have left to combat this pandemic. So please, if you do not need to leave your house, just stay home,” she pleaded.

“The scariest part is some people are infected without even knowing it because some can carry the virus without showing any symptoms. Those are the people who are a threat to our elderly and immunocompromised population. There is still a lot unknown about COVID-19, so the only way to control the spread is to keep people home as much as possible,” she said.

Cruz said that when she returned to the E.R. after completing self-isolation, the hospital already looked so different.

“It was like walking back into a war zone. We are constantly battling staffing and supply shortages, like masks,” she

said. “Day in and day out, we come back to work, and we just never know if it will ever slow down, or if our supplies will be enough. It is a tremendously scary time for us in health care right now.”

Cruz hopes that people of all ages will take the disease seriously.

“People who are not concerned about contracting COVID-19 because they are young and feel this is just like the flu—it is true that the chances of you recovering from the virus is good, but it is not just about you. It is about the many others who cannot fight this virus off. You can become the carrier that can infect a lot of people. This is why people are dying at a rapid rate.”

“COVID-19 is no joke,” stressed Cruz. “It will only continue to spread if we do not follow the proper measures to contain it.”

“We have to help each other by supporting each other,” she said. ■

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STAY HOME from 1

- Close all businesses except essential businesses.

“The less time we spend in public, the more lives we will save,” Inslee said.

The proclamation states it’s still safe for people to go outside as long as they remain at least six feet from each other. Grocery stores, doctor’s offices and other essential businesses will remain open. People can still participate in activities

such as bike rides, gardening, and dog walking—as long as they follow social distancing rules.

What’s closed

- Recreation areas in parks operated by King County, Seattle, Sammamish, Bellevue, Lynnwood, and Kirkland.
- All Everett Parks playgrounds
- State campgrounds
- Olympic National Park
- Mount Rainier National Park

Businesses temporarily closed

- Shanghai Garden
- King Noodles
- Dong Sing Market
- 85°C Bakery Cafe
- goPoké
- Ho Ho Seafood Restaurant
- Joyale Seafood Restaurant
- New Star Seafood Restaurant
- Green Leaf
- Momosan Ramen & Sake
- Kinokuniya Seattle
- Phnom Penh Noodle House

BLOG from 10

When I visited a Beijing university a decade ago, I saw how small the dormitory rooms were, and each one housed four students. One student said, if his roommate’s girlfriend visited him over the weekend, the other roommates had to get lost.

Now imagine three generations of a Chinese family cramped into a 400 square foot unit behind a store. There’s no wall separating the living room and bedrooms, just a curtain. That’s what I saw in Chengdu, China.

During the lockdown in Wuhan, food was delivered to people’s doorsteps. And they did not know what was going on in the outside world as they got their information from the state-owned television, usually full of propaganda.

Here in America, we have many sources of news. Our governor, county executive, and mayor appear on television and tell us how serious COVID-19 is. I believe every word they say. I trust the coverage on local television news and the Seattle Times. I don’t have to worry about fake news. We have to count our blessings.

Our grocery stores and pharmacies are still open. At least, we can still get out for fresh air, see people and walk around. It doesn’t sound too terrible. In strange times like these, it means a lot to be able to walk around in the International District, and feel the sunshine, even for a short time.

A reverse trend

I received a surprised text on Sunday from my former high school friend in Hong Kong, and also a University of Washington alum. In her text, she said the Chinese government listed over 6,000 experienced doctors who have experience in treating COVID-19 patients. They are now available to provide information and service globally. Many of these physicians speak English too.

Suddenly, America and China switched roles. Americans used to be the experts in global health, and now China is leading the way after a health crisis. Would President Trump want China’s help? The world can gain so much if the two global powers would collaborate. Unfortunately, U.S.-China relations have been strained since last year’s trade war.

We chatted on the phone. A reverse trend happened. She said, “At the Hong Kong post office, people wait in line to mail masks to England, Canada, and America. Two months ago, many Chinese Americans raised money to mail masks to China,” she said. “You can easily buy masks in Hong Kong (as the illness has been controlled). And prices have dropped a lot.”

To save masks and money, my sisters-in-law in Hong Kong locked themselves at home for days, typical for many Chinese families. Never mind they missed their grandkids. Never mind they didn’t get to play mahjong for more than a month.

Only one person from each household was allowed to go

out to do grocery shopping, and it’s usually the husband. They take the virus much more seriously than Seattle-ites, some of whom which I read about, organized private parties and everyone got infected, even though no one had the symptoms before. It didn’t occur to these folks that they can be a carrier of COVID-19.

She said, “As long as you wear masks, wash your hands and don’t touch (your) face, you are safe.”

I told her, many Americans are ignoring warnings about COVID-19. They congregate on beaches and don’t wear masks.

“In Hong Kong, people learned a hard lesson after SARS (in 2003),” she said. “In Hong Kong, if you don’t wear a mask in public, people stare at you with scorn because they think you are nasty, and spreading the virus. Americans feel strange towards people who wear masks, and discriminate against Asians who wear masks, according to what I saw on the news.”

Another reason American health officials don’t want the public to wear masks, she explained, “America doesn’t have enough masks to meet the demand. If the government tells everyone to wear masks, you won’t have enough for the doctors and nurses on the frontline.”

Please listen to Gov. Inslee’s plea. Stay home and save lives. ■

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RELIEF from 7

“It was very common among artists, especially literati painters, to express emotion through art to counter social decay,” said Duan, assistant professor of Chinese history at North Carolina State University.

Art was used specifically to counteract evil and death.

As the coronavirus pandemic has spread, paintings of deities and other talismans for protection and to ward off death have begun to surface on WeChat, the most popular form of social media used by Chinese and many Chinese

Americans.

Early sorrow and intimate knowledge

For the students organizing the auction, their commitment stems from their early and intimate exposure to the horrors of the disease. All of them have family still in China, some in the epicenter, Wuhan.

“My grandparents are still in lockdown, they haven’t been able to leave their home for months,” said Ruan.

As the outbreak started, they and their parents called family members in China every day. Now, they still text them

frequently, but usually call at least once a week.

This kind of immediate contact gave them an awareness that was perhaps lacking in the United States until later, they said.

“We learned about the strict quarantine measures early on, perhaps even before reporters made it known,” said Ruan.

They also learned early on of the nightmarish horrors and ravages suffered by family friends and relatives.

“This was very intimate for us right from the start,” she said.

Their current sale of art works is actually the second auction they’ve held.

The first, launched three weeks ago, was to fund hospitals in Wuhan, the hardest hit province in China.

They raised \$1,300 for relief efforts there. ■

To donate art to be auctioned, go to:
pacifcartistsalliance.wordpress.com/contact.

To view or bid for an art work, go to:
biddingowl.com/Auction/index.cfm?auctionID=20571

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