

IM JA CHOI

CEO and Founder, Penn Asian Senior Services Inc.

Honored at the 2021 AAWC Annual Meeting



Im Ja Choi is the Founder and CEO of Penn Asian Senior Service (PASSi), the largest Asian-serving homecare provider in Southeast Pennsylvania today. Im Ja's vision and leadership propelled PASSi's growth from a small non-profit organization to a multi-subsidary agency that has over 600 employees serving more than 750 seniors. PASSi has gained local, national, and international recognition for its work with the culturally marginalized aging population.

Im Ja founded PASSi (formerly Korean American Senior Services of Pennsylvania) in 2004 to help her mother, who was then recovering from stomach cancer. As a child of immigrant parents, she wanted her mother to have home care assistance without the added burden of language disparity.

While initially focusing on Korean elderly, Im Ja's awareness of the widespread need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services fueled her desire to offer PASSi services to seniors and aging adults in other Asian populations. To support this effort, she established a State licensed Vocational Institute to train PASSi's home health aides, including bilingual certified nursing assistants for local health institutions. Training is offered in English and several Asian languages (Korean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Khmer). Since 2006, PASSi trained more than 1,000 home health aides, 400 CNAs, and 250 vocational English students. Im Ja also donated \$105,000 of the



\$125,000 award she received as a 2011 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leader to support research on Asian seniors in the Greater Philadelphia region.



In 2014, Im Ja continued to expand PASSi's programming with the establishment of the Penn Asian Jubilee Center, a 100-capacity adult day care facility offering culturally and linguistically-based services for Asian seniors. In April 2019, PASSi opened the Evergreen Center for active Asian retirees, with amenities that include, among others, heated swimming pool and sauna, auditorium, garden café, and fitness room. The PASSi

Kitchen Xpress opened in April 2020 to provide meal delivery service to Asian American seniors who are unable to come to the Jubilee Center due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

PASSi's work has not gone unnoticed. The Global Ageing Network conferred on PASSi the Excellence in Aging Service Award at its bi-annual conference in Montreux, Switzerland in September 2017. The PA Department of Labor and Industry in December 2020 named PASSi as one of three recipients (out of 78 nominees) of the Governor's Award for Safety Excellence.

Im Ja serves on the PA Department of Aging Cultural Diversity Advisory Council, and the PA Commission on Women. Im Ja has an MS degree in Organizational Dynamics from the University of Pennsylvania, and a BA degree from Korea University.

Source: Penn Asian Senior Services Inc. <https://passi.us/>