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Title: Geri Handa Interview
Narrator: Geri Handa
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 7>

NW: So, around the time you came back to San Francisco? I think I'm really impressed and struck by how you said that when you were working on Asian seniors who share, who might have been enemies during the war, but now we are here in America, we share certain kind of things, those are very important things to share. Do you think it was important that you were America-born American in doing this kind of community work because you are not from Japan, or you are not from Philippines, and you speak in English, that's your, I understand it's your first language, right? So then you are working in this American organization and they are all in America, right? So I find it's very interesting that, you know, here you are, you are in America, and then you are working as an American when you are trying to bring all kinds of different kinds of people together, but also you are working for Asians. There are two interesting things going on.

GH: Yeah, yeah. Well, you know what? I've always felt that even though we have, we've, there's a certain amount of diversity, there's also some things that, that are, we have, some things that we share that are in common. So you find the, that, those things that are in common and you work together to reach certain goals so that everyone receives what they need, you know? And I, I think once that is clearly defined, then everyone will have that goal to work together because in working together you're able to accomplish much more.

NW: Right, right.

GH: And so, I think that's one of the things that it doesn't matter, even if you're, if you can speak the language, or not, if everyone comes into the same agreement, and then you find other people who support that as well, then, you know, then you're working towards the same goal. So that's the way I approach, you know, what we're doing with the medical examinations, same thing. And it's just different people I'm working with. It's primarily Japanese, and, but in working with, you know, other Asian groups, I find that, you know, we're all here in America. [laugh] We all have faced certain things that are, you know, difficult for us. And then having grown up with my, my grandmother, who lived with us, who was mostly Japanese speaking, I could understand some of the frustrations of not being able to communicate, you know, and there, and the language that's, you know, different from yours. But if you try to listen and try to understand what is going on, I think with that, people feel your sincerity, and, and feel that, I think a certain amount of trust, so they will also work with you, too. Because they understand you're not in it for yourself. You're in it so that everyone hopefully will gain from it, you know.

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