

***WISCAP Annual Meeting Award Nomination
Exemplary Community Action Staff Member Award***

Jim Vang has been an active leader in the Portage County Hmong community nearly 40 years.

Jim's family was one of the first to settle in Stevens Point, moving here in 1980.

In 1987, Jim met Trinity Lutheran Church Pastor Ken Knutson. They worked to call together a group of community members to discuss issues of Hmong resettlement in the area. That group became the Portage County Hmong Advocacy Group, which would meet monthly for the next 14 years. Their collaboration also sowed the seeds of Hmong Alliance Church of Stevens Point, which Jim helped to found in 1988. That same year, Mary Cayford at CAP Services began working with Hmong families. The following year, 1989, CAP established the Refugee Advocacy Program with a \$40,000 grant from United Way of Portage County and additional funds from Ministry Corporation. Jim Vang was hired as an interpreter for the program, which he would go on to run through the end of 2014.

Jim worked with hundreds of clients each year, helping them to access services, navigate legal and cultural obstacles, and achieve their goals. We believe he touched every family in the community in various ways.

Jim's tireless efforts helped Hmong refugees gain a foothold in the community as well as bridge the gap between Hmong culture and the broader culture. He reached over 10,000 people through his community presentations and training sessions!

In 2014, Jim helped CAP transition the program into Hmong UPLIFT, a multi-generational family literacy program that embraces parenting education, adult education, and early childhood education to bridge gaps within families looking to improve their lives. This evolution of program design has allowed the CAP to continue to address community needs in a culturally-competent fashion while keeping up with changes in program design and the funding landscape.

Jim has brought his steady determination and infectious sense of humor to his new role as Hmong Family Development Manager and worked to make new leaders feel welcome in their roles. The mix of dedication and adaptability he has brought to his service is exceptional yet also emblematic of Community Action's promise to transform lives and communities.