



## California September 2023 Quarterly Newsletter



In this second edition of our quarterly newsletter, we're thrilled to provide updates on this year's Leadership Summit & Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., reveal our Lights of Hope fundraising accomplishments, and spotlight several volunteer achievements. **[Spoiler Alert: Our California team has much to celebrate!]**

Thank you for collectively supporting Lights of Hope. We honored loved ones impacted by cancer by displaying thousands of bags across California and Washington, D.C., each light representing a story, a journey, and a powerful reminder of why we continue to fight tirelessly against this disease. While we celebrate our victories and the tremendous spirit of our volunteers, we acknowledge that there is still much work to do. This year, an estimated 1.9 million Americans will confront a new cancer diagnosis, with approximately 193,000 diagnoses occurring in California alone. Our volunteers are the core of our strength and the driving force behind our progress. Together, we will #FightCancerMakeTime. Together, we CAN and will make a difference to reduce the cancer burden **for everyone**.

**Please join us on October 4th at 5:00 pm for the Quarterly Ambassador Call - link below in the "Key Dates" section.**

## KEY DATES

October 4th, **Fall Quarterly Ambassador Call**: Get the Scoop on LS&LD! [Zoom link here](#).

October 18th, AAPI Volunteer Caucus New Member Orientation, 5-6 pm, Register [here](#).

December 12th, **Year End Celebration**: All Ambassadors! *Info coming soon*

## USEFUL LINKS

[2023 Call Calendar](#)

[ACS CAN California Home Page](#)

[ACS CAN Volunteer Home Page](#)

[Volunteer Report Back Form](#)

[California Emerging Leaders Council](#)

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- Scroll through social media posts on Instagram, X and Facebook with hashtags **#CancerLobbyDay** and **#LightsOfHope** to gain insight on the impact we made during LS&LD [here](#).
- Check out this year's Federal Priorities [here](#). Our current focus is to ensure Congress prioritizes **cancer research funding**, as cuts to cancer cures would have catastrophic consequences on our nation's ability to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.
- Learn more about the **Prostate-Specific Antigen Screening for High-risk Insured Men** (PSA for HIM) Act by taking the self-paced training [here](#).
- If you know of anyone between the ages of 18-35 who would be a good candidate for the [California Society of Emerging Leaders](#) (SEL), please contact [Kira Sano](#).
- Got feedback or ideas for the newsletter? Please send them to Vice SLA [Jamie Escoto](#) and Communications Chair of the SEL [Melody McBride](#).

## LIGHTS OF HOPE

Our 13th annual Lights of Hope event was held on September 19 and included nearly 10,000 decorated bags honoring or remembering loved ones impacted by cancer, as well as 53 newly designed 7-ft story columns highlighting one story from each state or territory. Hundreds of advocates and supporters participated in the event at Constitution Gardens on the National Mall, a beautiful complement to the nearly 65,000 Lights of Hope displayed in communities across the country.

Our California team chose to honor longtime volunteer and former SLA Linda Shaner, who passed away on April 30.



**Pictured alongside her bag is Linda's grandson, Steve Weldon.**

California achieved an incredible feat this year, raising a remarkable \$121,186 for Lights of Hope. This achievement not only surpassed our ambitious goal of \$80,000 but also shattered last year's record by an impressive 52%! We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every individual who contributed to this success through their dedicated fundraising efforts. Your unwavering commitment and hard work made it possible for us to exceed our target.

A special and well-deserved recognition goes out to California's top fundraisers: Laura LaRose, Kay Coleman & Janice Montle, and Jamie Escoto. These outstanding individuals not only excelled within California but also emerged among the top four

Please visit [this link](#) to view a video compilation of Lights of Hope Across America.

national fundraisers, exemplifying their dedication and passion for our cause.



As we reflect on our outstanding accomplishments, we are filled with anticipation for what the future holds. We eagerly look forward to the possibilities that the coming year will bring, knowing that with your continued support, we can achieve even greater milestones!

## **LEADERSHIP SUMMIT & LOBBY DAY**



[Leadership Summit & Lobby Day \(LS&LD\)](#) was an incredible success!

During Lobby Day, we had nearly 700 advocates from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam meet with members of Congress. We conducted meetings with all 100 Senate offices and 361 House offices. Of those meetings, 183 were with senior staff and 134 were with members of Congress. The California delegation was a diverse and talented group. The 53 volunteers and 7 staff, including our new ACS SVP Maria Olson, met with virtually all of the 52 California Congressional offices. These meetings made a real impact—the [PSA For HIM Act](#) is now up to 35 cosponsors in the Senate, the [MCED Act](#) is up to 44 cosponsors in the Senate and 184 cosponsors in the House, and we have seen renewed support for increased cancer research funding.

LS&LD is also a time to celebrate staff and volunteers who have gone above and beyond to make a meaningful impact in our cancer advocacy work internally and externally. Our own Kay Coleman won State Lead Ambassador of the Year. The recipient of last year's top national fundraiser, the brains behind the California Leadership Council, the driver behind California's record-breaking Lights of Hope successes this year, and an ACS/ACS CAN volunteer for over 23 years — Kay embodies passion, determination, and authentic leadership.



And that's not all... Spencer Lyons, Grassroots Manager for the greater Los Angeles area, was awarded Field Grassroots Professional of the Year. An ACS CAN staffer for over 25 years, Spencer is California's unsung hero. But don't take our word for it — check out what volunteers had to say about Spencer by watching his special nomination video [here](#).



A number of Emerging Leaders rocked ACS CAN's mission on the Hill during Lobby Day. Representative Eric Swalwell of CA's 14th District was so impressed with LS&LD first-timer Isabella Ramos and Chair of the [California Emerging Leaders Council](#) Kira Sano that he went on [Instagram Live to share their stories with his followers](#). We agree, Representative Swalwell - the future is bright indeed!

#### QUARTERLY SPOTLIGHT: ISABELLA & ZEENA



**Isabella is pictured with her father, Jose Ramos, a member of both the California**

#### NEW AMBASSADORS

Let's give a warm welcome to our new volunteers!

- Deepesh Agarwal, District 17
- Meena Datta - District 32
- Adrianna Doan, District 19
- Anwita Gandesiri, District 14
- Samuel Lin - District 43
- Lakeshia Phillips, District 10
- Isabella Ramos , District 10
- Amanda Rhea, District 15
- Rishika Tellamsetty, District 9

## **Leadership Council (CLC) and ACS CAN board.**

Meet Isabella Ramos (left), a high school student aspiring to become a pediatric nurse practitioner. This month, she discovered her passion for healthcare advocacy at her first Leadership Summit and Lobby Day (LS&LD). Isabella's experience talking to her representatives taught her a crucial lesson, "LS&LD highlighted the accessibility of our lawmakers and outlined the steps required for tangible change." As she stepped out of her representative's office, her teammates could see her eyes sparkle with excitement as she realized what a powerful role constituents play in passing legislation. As she pursues her dream, Isabella's commitment to advocacy promises a brighter future for healthcare.

**Meet Zeena Alzanoon (left), who shares her story to the right.**

- Susan Josephson, District 48
- Janice Montle, District 49

### **Zeena's Story**

"While on a trip to the Middle East, in 2018, I was not feeling like myself. I was too tired to do all my favorite things and I had no appetite. This was strange because I was in the best shape of my life and was playing on a competitive travel basketball team at the time. Even my coach began noticing that something was off about my performance. I decided to get a checkup and was told I had a travel flu. A few weeks later, another visit landed me in an emergency helicopter to Stanford's children's hospital where I was later diagnosed with Stage 4A Hodgkin's Lymphoma, with a mass right by my heart and with my left lung filled with fluid and on the verge of collapse.

After looking for ways to give back and support the cancer community, I found ACS to be the perfect place to give back. It is an amazing organization, and it is the work they do, like increasing funding for research, that is the reason I'm alive today. Since then I got to join the varsity basketball team, graduate high school, travel to Europe, and am now studying neurobiology at UC Davis! My chemotherapy was 98% effective and it was a relatively new treatment. This is because of research. We need to ensure the survival rate is much higher, so all people diagnosed with cancer can continue to experience a great life after their diagnosis.



I was lucky to attend the 2023 Lobby Day and Leadership Summit in DC this year. During my visit I spoke in Kevin Kiley’s office for my district, district 3. I was able to form a connection with my lawmaker and show firsthand how Cancer affects people in the community. Telling my story in a way that portrays the struggle of a frightened 14- year-old girl, while also inspiring hope and success and showing how a life can continue after cancer is how I motivate lawmakers to support our mission and to push change. To make sure those who are struggling have an opportunity to continue living their life and making memories after their diagnosis.”

## VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEWS

Kudos to our amazing volunteers in the news:

**Patsy Romero**, [Bakersfield Californian, CA: City to Require Permits to Sell Tobacco, Other Measures](#)

**Tina Tankka**, Letter to the Editor

[Mercury News, CA: Bill for Cancer Screening Must Pass](#)

**Stephanie Gordon-Rivera & Maria Curiel**, [Telemundo Bay Area](#)

And a very special newsworthy item: [Congressman Ruiz](#) published a [Facebook livestream](#) honoring **Linda Shaner**.

## EVENT RECAPS

### Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is a crucial celebration of the rich and diverse cultural contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities to the United States. This observance is not only about celebrating heritage but also about raising awareness of important issues within the Hispanic community. One such issue is the



disproportionate impact of cancer on Hispanics. Hispanic men and women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with and die from stomach cancer. Hispanic women are 30% more likely to die from cervical cancer compared to non-Hispanic White people. As we commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month, it is essential to recognize and address disparities that cause these grave statistics, like cultural and language barriers that hinder early detection. It is our mission to advocate for equitable healthcare access and resources to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background, have the best chance to prevent, battle, and survive cancer.

*Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health*

### **Important Information**

- October 8th, **Webinar**, more information to come on our website ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
- Check out our feature on ACS CAN's Facebook! ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
- Interested in learning more about the ACSí Se Puede Hispanic/Latino Advocacy Alliance? Please email [Leslie Ferreira](#).

### **2023 POLICY FORUM: HEALTH EQUITY AND ACCESS TO CARE**

On September 28, Robert Smith, PhD (*ACS Sr. Vice President, Early Cancer Detection Science*) gave a keynote address during a virtual forum which focused on how we can improve health equity. Alyce Adams, PhD from the Stanford Cancer Institute moderated the forum, where we heard from several distinguished speakers on how practitioners, healthcare systems and the private sector are rising to the challenge to address disparities in access to care and how public policies can ensure that advances in care are accessible for all communities.

Panelists included:

[Chidinma Chima-Melton](#), MD, MBA, FCCP - UCLA Health

[Zui Surani](#) - Cedars-Sinai Cancer

[Jesse Nodora, DrPH](#) - UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center

[Luis Carvajal Carmona, PhD](#) - UC Davis

If you missed the event or would like to revisit it, you may view the recording [here](#) in the *Archived Events* folder.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### What is your role as an ACT! Lead or a Legislative Ambassador?

To better understand our State Leadership structure, you can review the [responsibilities of a Legislative Ambassador](#) versus an [Ambassador Constituent Team \(ACT\) Lead](#). Each district should have one ACT Lead, while multiple Legislative Ambassadors can volunteer in a district.

The ACT Lead is the lead volunteer voice for ACS CAN in the congressional district where they live. They work in conjunction with ACS CAN staff, lawmakers, and other volunteers throughout the district to achieve our goal of decreasing death and suffering caused by cancer.

If you know someone who might be interested in becoming a Legislative Ambassador, invite them to [apply here](#). We will talk more about volunteer leadership at the next Quarterly Ambassador meeting on October 4th.

### California Leadership Council

The ACS CAN California Leadership Council (CLC) was formed in 2020 to bring grassroots leaders together to "**Lead the Way and Leave a Legacy**" by helping to fund and advance ACS CAN's mission. CLC members utilize their expertise and networks in three primary ways: (1) to support ACS CAN's legislative agenda, (2) to sponsor California's Policy Events, and, (3) to ensure that California meets its Lights of Hope fundraising goal. They also provide mentorship to new ACS CAN Ambassadors and emerging leaders.

CLC members make a personal donation each year at the President's Circle Level (\$3000) or at the Champions Circle level (\$1000) and receive the listed benefits for their level. In addition, Champions Circle members commit to raising an additional \$2000. Corporate members at the \$5000 level and above are also invited to have a representative on the CLC. In addition to their listed benefits, CLC members are invited to participate in selecting topics and speakers for CA Policy events, to attend special briefings, and to regularly engage with other CLC members both virtually and in-person.

We invite you to consider joining the California Leadership Council. For more info, please visit: <https://www.fightcancer.org/california-acs-can-leadership-council> or contact [Kay Coleman](#).



655 15th Street, NW, Suite 503 | Washington, DC 20005 | (202) 661-5700



©2022 American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network works daily to make cancer a national priority.

If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).