

From: OAPIA <oapia@dc.gov>  
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Reply: oapia@dc.gov

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## OAPIA Update

*News Updates from the DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs*

**Dear AAPI Community Members,**

The DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs is working hard to make sure that you are up to date on all the things going on in our office. To help keep you up to date, we have created this newsletter to give brief updates on things happening in our office and in District Government.



Join us in creating a better AAPI community in the District!

Warm Regards,

Soohyun "Julie" Koo  
Director, DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

**Mayor Vincent C. Gray Wishes District's Hindu and Indian Communities a Happy Diwali!**

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Executive Office of the Mayor  
Office of Communications



**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, October 26, 2011

**CONTACT:** Linda Wharton Boyd 202.727.5011; [linda.wharton-boyd@dc.gov](mailto:linda.wharton-boyd@dc.gov)  
Doxie McCoy 202.727.9691; [doxie.mccoy@dc.gov](mailto:doxie.mccoy@dc.gov)

**MAYOR VINCENT C. GRAY WISHES DISTRICT'S HINDU AND INDIAN  
COMMUNITIES A HAPPY DIWALI**

*Festival of Lights Is Celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Some Buddhists and Many Indians*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)— Mayor Vincent C. Gray issued the following statement today on the holiday of Diwali (also known as Deepvali), which is sacred to Hindus but also holds significance for Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhists as well as people of other faiths throughout India and the Indian diaspora:

*"I wish a blessed and happy Diwali to the thousands of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and members of the Indian community living in the District. This festival of lights shining in the darkness celebrates the triumph of knowledge and goodwill over ignorance and hatred. Many symbolize this meaning by lighting the Diya, or lamp, and celebrate with feasting, dancing and other gatherings with family, friends and neighbors.*

*Diwali is also a time for prayer, meditation and consideration of the plight of the less fortunate. To those in the District who celebrate Diwali, I wish a Saal Mubarak (blessed year). May we all renew our commitment to helping those in need and improving our city, our nation and our world."*

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**Follow Mayor Gray on Twitter and Facebook!**

Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/MayorVinceGray> and Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/DCGov>

On October 26, 2011, Mayor Vincent C. Gray wished the District's Hindu and Indian communities a Happy Diwali. Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, some Buddhists, and many Indians.

**South Korean High School Students Visit OAPIA**



On Friday, October 28, 2011 and Saturday, October 29, 2011, two groups of high school students from South Korea met with OAPIA Director Soohyun "Julie" Koo. The South Korean students were on a tour of the United States, and stopped by OAPIA in Washington, DC to learn motivational skills and tips that will lead to a successful, meaningful, and happy life from Director Julie Koo.

### Community Events

#### HBI-DC Benefit Gala and Award Dinner

On October 23, 2011, OAPIA Director Soohyun "Julie" Koo and staff were in attendance at the second annual Hepatitis B Initiative of Washington DC (HBI-DC) Benefit Gala and Award Dinner. HBI is a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting hepatitis B in at-risk communities. The event took place at the China Garden Restaurant in Arlington and presented Dr. Howard Koh, the Assistant Secretary for Health at the US Department of Health and Human Services, with the "Hep B Super Hero Award" for his leadership in fighting viral hepatitis at the national level.

#### American Islamic Congress Gala

On November 2, 2011, OAPIA staff were in attendance at the tenth anniversary American Islamic Congress (AIC) Gala. AIC is a non-profit organization dedicated to working toward interfaith understanding, civil rights and peace in the U.S. and the Middle East.

#### Many Stories, One Night: A Celebration of DC's Immigrant Communities

On November 3, 2011, Director Julie Koo and OAPIA staff were in attendance at the Many Stories, One Night: A Celebration of DC's Immigrant Communities event at the Gala Theatre. The event served to highlight the importance of enforcing the DC Language Access Act of 2004 for individuals needing language

interpretation while seeking services from or at government institutions. Seniors from the Wah Luck House of Chinatown and the Vietnamese American Community Service Center were a sample of the many local immigrant groups in attendance. The event was co-sponsored by the DC Language Access Coalition, Many Languages One Voice, the Office of Human Rights, the Mayor's Office on African Affairs, the Mayor's Office on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, and the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs.

### OAPIA Welcomes Fall Intern Jillian Aquino



Jillian Aquino is currently a senior at the University of Maryland, College Park pursuing her undergraduate degree in Microbiology. Initially interested in infectious diseases and public health, her focus has since narrowed to community outreach as it pertains to the areas of health and education. She decided to pursue her internship at OAPIA in order to help the organization expand its health services by increasing its HIV/AIDS outreach activities to the local Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Jillian also hopes to learn more about OAPIA's other programs and services, particularly those involving policy and economic development issues.

With her biology background and experience from past internships in several governmental agencies such as the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health, Jillian hopes to further help OAPIA accomplish its mission in serving the local AAPI community by serving as a liaison between OAPIA and the DC Department of Health in the research areas of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STDs, and Tuberculosis.

### OAPIA to Host Free Workshops on Changes to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

OAPIA, in conjunction with the DC Department of Human Services, and the Vietnamese American Community Service Center, will host two free workshops on changes to the TANF program.

OAPIA will provide District residents the most updated information on what changes will take place, how it affects those who are currently receiving benefits, and what people need to do in order to continue receiving benefits.

#### First Workshop

When: Tuesday, November 8, 10:30 am to 11:30 am

Where: Vietnamese American Community Service Center - 2437 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

#### Second Workshop

When: Tuesday, December 6, 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

Where: Asian Service Center - 714 G Place NW, Washington, DC 20001

### DC Mayor's Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

The DC Mayor's Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs convened its monthly meeting to discuss issues going on in the DC AAPI community.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 23, 2011 @ 6:30 pm at the OAPIA Office. All commission meetings are open to the public.

If you have any questions about the commission or its meetings, please contact [oapia@dc.gov](mailto:oapia@dc.gov).

[oapia@dc.gov](mailto:oapia@dc.gov) | [www.apia.dc.gov](http://www.apia.dc.gov) | Phone: (202) 727-3120 | Fax: (202) 727-9655



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OAPIA | 441 4th St NW | Suite 721 North | Washington | DC | 20001

