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OAPIA Bi-Weekly Newsletter

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

A Message from the Mayor



VINCENT C. GRAY
MAYOR

Dear Community Members,

We've just wrapped up Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and a series of educational and exciting events. I hope you were able to take advantage of some of the offerings, including the performances and awards ceremony at the Lincoln Theatre last week.

A number of community partners contributed to making the May observance a celebration that all communities in the District of Columbia could enjoy. As my administration works to build a more prosperous and sustainable D.C., the involvement of public-private partnerships is essential. To help individuals and organizations leverage those partnerships, the D.C. Office of Partnerships and Grant Services and the Center for Nonprofit Advancement will be hosting the 13th Annual Public Private Partnership Conference on Friday, June 7th. This comprehensive day of learning and networking will connect participants with leaders from across the region and resources to enable them to assist the city in improving the quality of life of all residents.

In addition, I welcome recent Council passage of my fiscal year 2014 budget that includes \$15 million to carry out my plans to create the One City Fund. The Fund will allow nonprofits to compete openly and transparently for grants for projects that advance the key goals of: 1) growing and diversifying our economy; 2) educating or preparing our residents for the emerging new economy; 3) increasing sustainability; or 4) improving the quality of life for our residents.

Another public-private partnership is my Chinatown Cultural Opportunity Grant program. These grants are given to organizations that enhance and maintain the cultural vibrancy of the historic Chinatown neighborhood. Moreover, my Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs annually awards grants to community based organizations that provide grassroots services for our Asian American and Pacific Islander residents, particularly those who are culturally and linguistically isolated. Such services include job preparedness and training to improve workforce readiness skills, education services that complement public school curriculum and other supportive social services.

These partnerships and investments greatly increase our capacity to provide critical services to underserved communities, which in turn benefits all District residents. I thank all community partners for the good work they are doing to help make the District of Columbia the greatest city in the world!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vincent C. Gray".

Vincent C. Gray

OAPIA in the Community

OAPIA Emphasizes Importance of Language Access



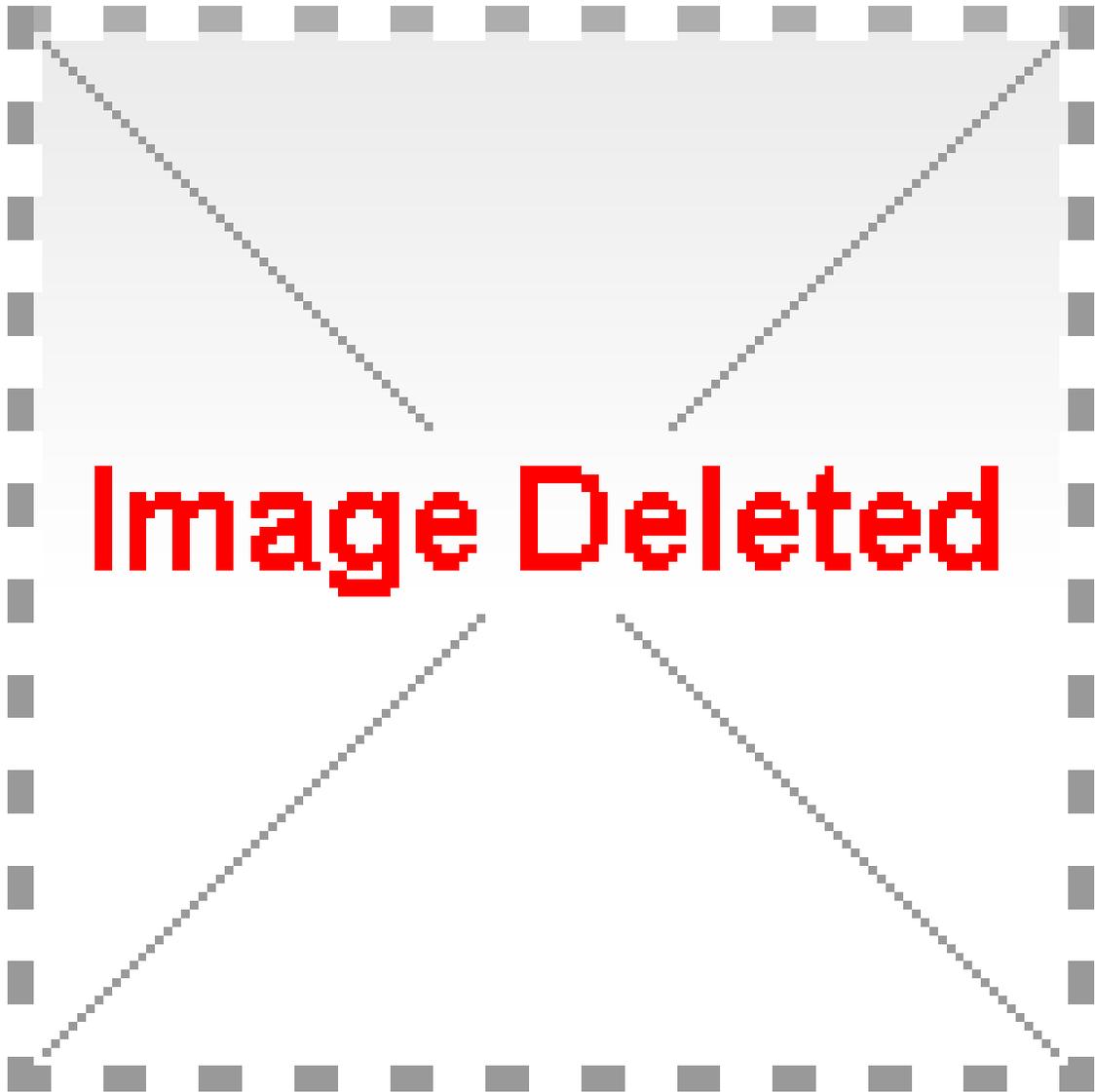
(Washington, DC) - The DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), in partnership with Many Languages One Voice (MLOV), addressed the importance of ensuring language access for immigrant communities, including limited-English proficient (LEP) and non-English proficient (NEP) Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities, on Wednesday, May 22, 2013.

Over 140 community members, professionals, and government officials attended a screening of the film *English Vinglish* at Landmark's E Street Cinema. The film screening focuses on Shashi Godbole, an Indian immigrant, and addresses issues pertaining to language and cultural barriers often faced by immigrant communities in the United States.

For many immigrants, the struggle to learn English impacts their ability to fully participate in American civic, popular and political life. Additionally, language barriers affect these communities on a personal level, affecting one's daily interaction with neighbors, friends, or community members. Fifteen percent (15%) of Asian American District residents speak a language other than English at home, a figure that includes students, working adults, and the elderly.

For the entire press release, please visit [here](#).

OAPIA and the Department of Public Works (DPW) Hosts Meet and Greet with the Korean American Grocers Association of Washington, DC (KAGRO)



On May 28, 2013, OAPIA Director Soohyun "Julie" Koo and staff and the Department of Public Works Director William Howland Jr. met with members of the Korean American Grocers Association of Washington, DC to discuss issues pertaining to their community.

OAPIA Hosts 2nd Brown Bag Cultural Lunch Dialogue on the Korean American Community



On May 30, 2013, the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) hosted the second of four Brown Bag Cultural Lunch Dialogues of District of Columbia government employees. The second session covered the Korean American community, and was held at the Old Council Chambers in the Judiciary Square building. The purpose of these dialogues is to increase the awareness of District employees of various ethnic communities within the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community. The speakers for the Korean American dialogue were Gary Cha, Founder and Co-Owner of Yes! Organic Market, and Sam Yoon, President of the Council of Korean Americans.

Mayor Vincent C. Gray and OAPIA Recognize Excellence in Community Service at AAPI Heritage Month Celebration



(Washington, DC) - Mayor Vincent C. Gray and Soohyun "Julie" Koo, Director of the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), recognized unsung heroes in the Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community Thursday night before an audience of more than 1,000 individuals at the Lincoln Theatre. OAPIA hosted the AAPI Heritage Month Celebration in partnership with the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCA) and Kollaboration DC, a non-profit organization dedicated to showcasing the talents of aspiring AAPI entertainers.

"This celebration gave everyone present an opportunity to learn about the good work of the recipients of Community Service Awards and to see great talent in the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community," Mayor Gray said. "Their contributions help make the District of Columbia a thriving and diverse city."

Mayor Gray presented awards to Wuiping Yap, Executive Director of the Asia Heritage Foundation; and to the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project. Outgoing Chief Financial Officer Dr. Natwar M. Gandhi also was recognized for his longtime service to the District of Columbia. DCCA Executive Director Lionell Thomas also was on hand to congratulate the honorees.

For the entire press release, please visit [here](#).

OAPIA News

OAPIA Welcomes Summer Interns

Seunghee Kim was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea. She attends Yonsei University and is currently a junior exchange student at American University in Washington, DC. She is majoring in Political Science, as well as Chinese language and literature. Seunghee's interests consist of



Seunghye Kim

a rising sophomore at the University of Rochester (U of R), double majoring in linguistics and religion. Heidi is the co-founder, vice president, and communications director of the Linguistics Undergraduate Council at U of R, as well as a regular contributor to the school newspaper and student-run theater. Her interests span from 20th century French social thought, hermeneutics, and semiotics to post-colonial community building in developing nations, as demonstrated by her previous internship at the Women's Microfinance Initiative. Through years of volunteering and avid participation in local grassroots movements, she has gained considerable organizational skills.

Heidi hopes to make good use of her language skills, get more involved in the DC community, and gain valuable work experience in the public administration sector at OAPIA. Her long-term aspiration is to become a university professor and/or researcher in the field of social sciences.

public relations and international relations, as demonstrated by her experience of leading a planning department in the University Forum of Foreign Affairs & National Security.

Through her previous work experience, she has honed not only her research and writing skills, but also communication skills.

Seunghye hopes to improve her language skills and gain valuable work experience in the public administration sector at OAPIA. Her long-term goal is to work for the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency as a market researcher, helping Korean small businesses to succeed in the world.

Heidi Zheng was born in China, where she lived until the 8th grade. A graduate of Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland, she is currently



Heidi Zheng

Kenneth Chen was born and raised in Hong Kong, and immigrated to the United States in 2005. After moving, he learned more about democracy from school and became fascinated by the political system in the United States and how it helps people in need. Therefore, he then decided to major in political science at Skyline College. Kenneth is planning to transfer to the University of California, Davis, starting in the fall quarter of 2013. He has interned for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors within Supervisor Malia Cohen's office. He is also an economic tutor at Skyline College's learning center.

Kenneth wishes to gain more experience working in different government agencies, especially agencies that engage in Asian American affairs. He is currently placed at the DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) as an OCA intern through the OCA summer internship program.



Kenneth Chen

Spotlight: National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)



The National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) is a federation of LGBTQ Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander organizations. NQAPIA seeks to build the capacity of local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) AAPI organizations, invigorate grassroots organizing, develop leadership, and challenge homophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant bias. NQAPIA is a project of the Tides Center.

For information about NQAPIA, please visit [here](#).

June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month



In the United States, the month of June has been officially designated as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month in honor of the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan, the tipping point of the nationwide Gay Liberation movement. Celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposiums, and concerts, and LGBT Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world. The purpose of the commemorative month is to recognize the impact that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on history locally, nationally, and internationally.

For more information or resources concerning the LGBT community, please visit:

- [DC Mayor's Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs](#)

- [National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance \(NQAPIA\)](#)
- [KhushDC](#)

DC Mayor's Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

The DC Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs usually convenes monthly meetings to discuss current issues affecting the DC AAPI community.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 6:30 pm in Conference Room 1114 at One Judiciary Square, 441 4th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001.

All commission meetings are open to the public. If you have any questions about the commission or its meetings, please contact oapia@dc.gov.

oapia@dc.gov | www.apia.dc.gov | Phone: (202) 727-3120 | Fax: (202) 727-9655



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