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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:

I was delighted to sign this week the District of Columbia Drivers Safety Amendment Act, my legislation that is designed to increase public safety for all who drive, ride, walk or bike in the District of Columbia, including the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. The bill allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue limited purpose driver's licenses, learner's permits, or identification cards to undocumented District residents, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status.

This historic legislation puts the District in the vanguard of a national movement to help immigrant communities lead normal lives and have the opportunity to drive to work, school, daycare or church, among other places. For many working families, a car is a lifeline to survival.

This bill also makes our city safer for everyone by ensuring that all who wish to drive can come forward without fear to secure the proper training, get tested, and obtain permits and insurance.

Congress and the White House are currently debating immigration policy. My administration also has had numerous conversations about protecting the rights of the many undocumented immigrants who have made the District of Columbia their home, who are raising families here, and who contribute to this growing city.

But, unlike Congress, we are moving forward on the calls for action to alleviate roadblocks which make life difficult for the thousands of District residents who are seeking protections and normalcy in their daily lives. The District of Columbia Drivers Safety Amendment Act is a major step toward achieving our goals.

Sincerely,  
  
Vincent C. Gray

## OAPIA in the Community

### **Mayor Gray Encourages District Residents to Give to Relief Efforts in the Philippines Following Disastrous Typhoon**

*Offers Condolences and Support to Those Affected by Powerful Storm*



(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - Mayor Vincent C. Gray today offered his condolences and called for support for the people of the Philippines in the wake of the deadly typhoon that struck the city of Tacloban and other areas of the country. The Mayor also encouraged District residents to offer their support to neighbors who may have family in the region affected by the typhoon.

"Unfortunately, we are bearing witness to another historic tragedy in the Philippines, which has suffered from disastrous typhoons and storms in recent years," said Mayor Gray. "My thoughts and prayers go out to the people of the central Philippines, as well as to the residents of the District of Columbia who have loved ones there. I have reached out to Philippines Ambassador Jose Lampe Cuisia, Jr. to express my sympathies and to offer any assistance the District may be able to provide."

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

### **Mayor Gray and OAPIA Launch the Connect, Engage and BUILD! Initiative for Small Businesses**



*Mayor Gray, OAPIA Director Soohyun "Julie" Koo, DC government agency directors, and AAPI small business leaders.*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - The Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) launched the Connect, Engage and BUILD! (CEB) Initiative at the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) on November 14, 2013. Over 80 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) business leaders, community members, and District government officials attended the event.

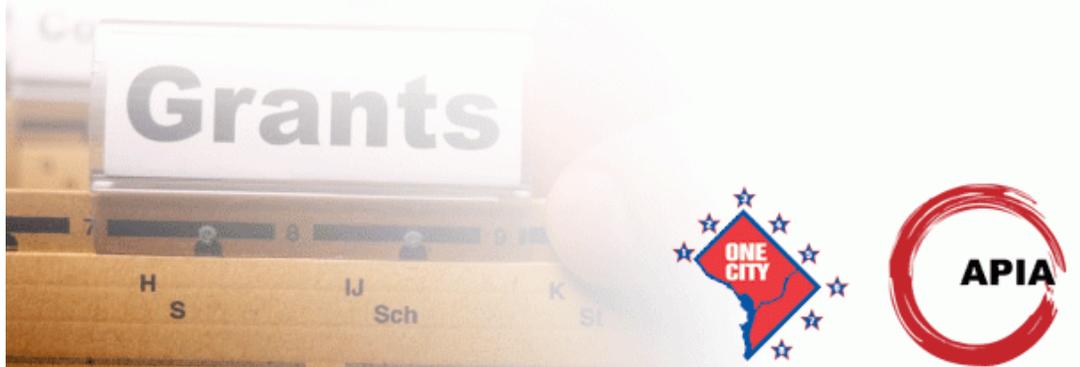
CEB is an initiative to connect AAPI small retail businesses with District government resources and neighbors so that businesses can engage with the District and community to help build and diversify the District's economy. Multiple programs will be implemented under CEB such as the Adopt-a-Block Program, Project BUILD (Business University partnership to Innovate, Link, and Develop Small Retail Businesses), the Right Choice Campaign, and the Storefront Façade Improvement program.

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

### **OAPIA Announces a Request for Applications for the FY2014 Vietnamese American Youth Empowerment and Capacity Building Grant**

## 2014 Vietnamese American Youth Empowerment and Capacity Building Grant

[LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO APPLY FOR THE GRANT](#)



(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - The Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) issued its Request For Applications (RFA) for the FY2014 Vietnamese American Youth Empowerment (VAYE) and Capacity Building Grant. Copies of the RFA can be found at [www.apia.dc.gov](http://www.apia.dc.gov) or at OAPIA's office located at 441 4th Street, NW, 721N Washington, DC 20001.

OAPIA is soliciting grant applications from qualified community-based organizations (CBOs) serving the District's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. The VAYE grant will be available to eligible community-based organizations providing mentoring and academic services to Vietnamese American youth. The Capacity Building grant will be available to eligible community-based organizations providing direct services to the District's Asian American and Pacific Islander.

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

### **Mayor Vincent C. Gray Signs the DC Drivers Safety Amendment Act of 2013**



*Mayor Gray speaking in front of a full audience before signing the DC Drivers Safety Amendment Act.*



*OAPIA Director Koo supporting Mayor Gray as he signs the DC Drivers Safety Amendment Act.*

OAPIA joined Mayor Gray as he signed the DC Drivers Safety Amendment Act on Monday, November 18, 2013. The DC Drivers Safety Amendment Act of 2013 allows the District's

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to issue a driver's license, learner's permit or identification card to undocumented District residents. The act also ensures that all residents can safely operate vehicles on the District's roadways and allows for the registration of insured vehicles.

## OAPIA Hosts Housing and Health Insurance Workshop



*Attendees listen attentively at the housing and health insurance workshop.*

On November 19, 2013, OAPIA hosted a housing and health insurance workshop with over 70 District residents in attendance. Information on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 housing choice voucher program was presented, as well as information on legal aid and on how to apply for affordable health insurance.

## Greetings from the Community Outreach Specialist



Hello everyone, this is Andrew Chang, your friendly OAPIA Community Outreach Specialist. As you may have noticed, we have instituted a new feature in the OAPIA Update - updates from OAPIA staff, the Commission, and friends of OAPIA! I will start off my first update by completing a profile ala "[I am AAPI in DC.](#)"

### **How long have you been in DC?**

I am a native Floridian, having moved to DC a little more than two years ago on October 1, 2011.

### **What brings you to DC and what do you enjoy most about DC?**

I came to the District of Columbia to begin my career after having

completed two summer internships in DC in the public sector, and obtaining a Master of Arts in Political Science with a concentration in Public Affairs from the University of Florida (Go Gators! Excuse the bad season). I had built a good network in the District over the years, and thus knew there would be career opportunities and a support network for me.

One of the main things I enjoy about DC is that there is always an event, function, or cause going on, as I need to be stimulated or I get bored quickly! I also enjoy eating around and using Yelp to find good eats.

#### **How do you stay engaged within the community?**

As the OAPIA Community Outreach Specialist, as a Board of Director at the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership, as a supporter and former intern of OCA, and through my friends, colleagues, and other supporters, I find ways to keep abreast of the issues, to connect with like-minded folks, and to educate others of pressing issues affecting our community, both at the local and national level.

#### **Own Words**

Make the most of your opportunities and enjoy life to the fullest.

### Spotlight: Dana Tai Soon Burgess is First Choreographer in Residence at the Smithsonian



Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company's 2013-2014 season features some of the most exciting performances in the company's 21-year history. Burgess is the Smithsonian Institution's first ever choreographer-in-residence.

#### *National Portrait Gallery*

DTSB Dance Company is currently the National Portrait Gallery's artists-in-residence in conjunction with the museum's "Dancing the Dream" exhibition (through July 13, 2014), the Smithsonian's first exhibition to focus on dance in America. Fall rehearsals, held in the galleries,

helped shape a site-specific work, which was performed in the museum's Kogod Courtyard on Nov. 16. Titled, "Homage," the work was inspired by the museum's collection and features a soundtrack of interviews and music associated with important moments in American dance history, starting with James Cagney performing in the 1942 film "Yankee Doodle Dandy." "'Homage' reflects the continuum of dance in the U.S. and honors American dance pioneers such as Shirley Temple, Martha Graham, John Travolta, Ted Shawn, Katherine Dunham, Liza Minnelli and Michio Ito, while at the same time keeping my own voice," said Burgess.

"Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company's participation is an integral part of the exhibition experience," said curator Amy Henderson. "Dana is a great storyteller and the National Portrait Gallery is committed to telling great American stories. In Dana's case, that takes place through movement."

A second site-specific piece will be performed at the museum in April 2014.

The "Dancing the Dream" exhibition explores the relationship between the art of dance and the evolution of a modern American identity, telling stories of the generations of performers, choreographers, and impresarios who harnessed America's diversity and dynamism into styles that reverberated with the American experience. It traces this story through images of performers such as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Michael Jackson, Savion Glover, Balanchine, Baryshnikov, Beyonce, Agnes deMille and Lady Gaga.

For more information about Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company, please visit [www.dtsbdc.org](http://www.dtsbdc.org), follow the company on Twitter @dtsbcodance or become a friend on [Facebook](#).

## Spotlight: Asian American LEAD (AALEAD) Recognized in the 2013-14 Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington



Asian American LEAD (AALEAD) was selected from some 220 community-based organizations to be featured in the print and online versions of the 2013-2014 Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington. AALEAD provides After School, Summer, and Mentoring Programs to 300

low-income and underserved Asian American youth in the region. The organization survived a rigorous evaluation and financial review process to achieve this honor. Please feel free to [request](#) a catalogue in the mail or visit the [AALEAD page](#) on the Catalogue's online portal!

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

## November is American Diabetes Awareness Month



In response to the rapid growth of diabetes in America, American Diabetes Month is held every year in the month of November in order to raise awareness and take preventative measures towards the growth of diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, 26 million children and adults in the United States have diabetes while another 79 million are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes. The onset of type 2 diabetes is heavily impacted by our environment and lifestyle choices, and as a result, American Diabetes Month works to promote healthier lifestyles in order to decrease the likelihood of developing diabetes.

The Asian American community in the United States is more likely to develop diabetes than the Caucasian population as a result of genetic and environmental influences. The Asian American Diabetes Initiative states that diabetes is a rapidly growing issue facing Asian and Pacific Islanders who have immigrated to the United States as diabetes affects 10% of Asian Americans, 90-95% of which have been categorized as type 2 diabetes.

For more information about American Diabetes Month, please visit:

- [DC Department of Health's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program](#)
- [American Diabetes Association: Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders](#)
- [United States National Library of Medicine: Asian American Health, Health and Diseases - Diabetes](#)

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