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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 Director

#### Dear Community Members:

This past year, OAPIA made great strides helping to improve the quality of life for the District's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents, AAPI Community Organizations, and AAPI businesses through advocacy, engagement, and partnership.

OAPIA partnered with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) on the "[Right Choice Campaign](#)," to raise awareness among AAPI owned businesses in the District on synthetic marijuana. 151 AAPI businesses participated in this initiative and signed a pledge to not sell synthetic marijuana or other drug paraphernalia. OAPIA also educated the businesses about the harmful effects of synthetic drugs.



In June 2014, OAPIA and the Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) launched the [AAPI Tenants' Rights Awareness Campaign](#), which presented information on tenants' rights in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hindi, and Bengali to the AAPI community. OAPIA also determined the primary housing concerns of the AAPI community by conducting a housing needs assessment survey, and recommended solutions to limited and non-English proficient AAPI residents on how to resolve various housing issues. OAPIA also created a multilingual Tenants' Rights Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet.

OAPIA commemorated the 10th year anniversary of the passage of the [Language Access Act of 2004](#) through a [series of events and programs in 2014](#). OAPIA's "10 for 10" highlighted ten OAPIA resources and programs on language access in the District of Columbia.

OAPIA has continually championed and worked with other District government agencies and the community to find innovative solutions for our District AAPI residents, and will continue to engage in such efforts in the years to come!

Warm Wishes,

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

## OAPIA in the Community

### **OAPIA Mourns Death of Commissioner Ajay K. Ojha, Ph.D.**

*Dr. Ojha served on the Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Community Development*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - The DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) expressed their profound sadness and mourn the passing of Commissioner Ajay K. Ojha, Ph.D. He passed away on November 12, 2014 at the young age of 38 while volunteering overseas in Guatemala for a community service project for local youth.

"Ajay was a valued commissioner for the District, exemplifying the values of hard work and passion in his dedication to the community," said Mayor Vincent C. Gray. "Ajay touched the lives of those who knew and cherished him, and my heart goes out to his family at this time of loss."

Dr. Ojha served as a member of the DC Mayor's Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Community Development since 2013. He worked closely with OAPIA on District Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community issues, particularly those affecting South Asian Americans. Ajay was also involved in other local and national community efforts, including: serving on the board of the Network of South Asian Professionals - Washington, DC (NetSAP DC), volunteering with South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), volunteering with Asha for Education, volunteering with the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF), and serving as a mentor to youth and college students.

"Ajay dedicated his life to public service, professionally and personally, giving back to the community," said Soohyun "Julie" Koo, OAPIA Director. "As we mourn his passing, let us remember his commitment to the AAPI community and how he inspired to uplift and serve others less fortunate than him. He was a very dedicated, passionate, honest, and humble person whom many of us truly enjoyed working with."

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

### **OAPIA and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Host Safety Meeting**

OAPIA, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), organized a safety and meeting for Florida Avenue Market merchants on December 2, 2014 at Maurice Electrical Supply. Five individuals attended the meeting. Mandarin and Korean interpretation services were provided.



*MPD presents safety tips to businesses at the Florida Avenue Market.*

## Spotlight: The Network of South Asian Professionals, Washington, DC Chapter (NetSAP DC)



The Network of South Asian Professionals, Washington, DC Chapter (NetSAP DC) is a non-profit, non-partisan, volunteer-based 501(c)(3) organization committed to identifying and celebrating the diversity of South Asians in America by promoting professional development; encouraging community service activities; raising awareness of the South Asian culture; and providing forums for the discussion of important societal issues. As one of the largest local and national South Asian organizations, NetSAP DC represents over 6,000 individuals in the DC metro area with over 300 members.

For more information on [NetSAP DC](#) or ways to get involved, please visit [here](#).

## December is Universal Human Rights Month



## Human Rights

Universal Human Rights Month began as Human Rights Day in 1950, when the United Nations General Assembly agreed to it as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations to teach educate and promote respect for rights and freedoms to equality, belief, and security.

Locally, the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights (OHR) was established to eradicate discrimination and increase equal opportunity and protect human rights for residents and visitors in the District. OHR enforces local and federal human rights laws, including the DC Human Rights Act, by providing a legal process to those who believe they have been discriminated against. OHR proactively enforces human rights in the District through the OHR Director's Inquiries, which allow it to identify and investigate practices and policies that may be discriminatory.

For more information or resources concerning human rights, please visit:

- [DC Office of Human Rights](#)
- [The United Nations: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#)
- [The United Nations: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

[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