



NEW JERSEY

Embracing the Hopes & Aspirations of Asian Pacific Americans

ACTION

June 2023 Vol.3 No.5

Celebrating Our Heritage & Scholarship Awards

February 11th Gung Hey Fat Choy! 2023 (4721 in the Lunar calendar) is the Year of the Water Rabbit. According to Asian folklore, the Year of the Rabbit is a good time to slow down, reflect and strive for balance. The Rabbit is the fourth animal in the zodiac cycle and signifies good fortune, happiness and peacefulness. If you were born in 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999 or 2011 this is your year!

OCA-NJ held its annual Lunar New Year Banquet at Noodle Wong Restaurant in Parsippany on February 11. Our very own Rabbits, in traditional Chinese red Tang suit (for the male) and cheongsam/qipao dress (for the female) greeted our many guests celebrating the Lunar New Year.

Chinese New Year is a time for family reunions. Many families and friends celebrated together at the festive banquet. Guests feasted on some delicious, traditional, and customary Chinese New Year dishes that have auspicious homophonics meaning. Such as crab meat yi mein **noodles** (also known as Longevity noodles—they are longer than normal noodles and uncut); steamed whole **fish** (the word “fish” sounds like surplus and abundance), crispy fried **chicken** with minced garlic (chicken symbolizes unity and is a homophone for good luck and prosperity); twin **lobster** with ginger and scallion (lobsters, sometimes called “the dragon of the sea” represents the dragon, a symbol of strength and good fortune), and seafood crabmeat bacon & dry scallop fried **rice** (symbolizing wealth, fertility and abundance).

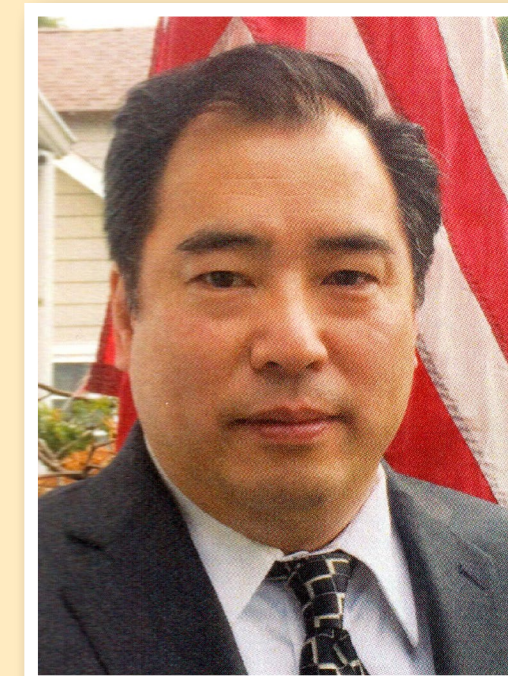
The banquet was complete with live, colorful, traditional Chinese lion dance with clanging symbols and booming drum to welcome the New Year. According to traditional Chinese belief, the lion signifies courage, stability, and superiority. The dance, originated in the Tang dynasty (618-906 AD), is to bring good luck and drive away evil spirits. Our lion “ate” the lucky lettuce and spitted it out to represent the lion spreading wealth and prosperity to all in the new year. The lion dance troupe was led by OCA-NJ president, Henry Lee, and his students and volunteers.

OCA-NJ wish you good health, prosperity, and good luck in the New Year of the Rabbit!

May 21st OCA New Jersey chapter celebrated Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage month during their 22nd Annual AAPI Heritage and Scholarship Luncheon on May 21, 2023, at the Flaming Grill and Supreme Buffet in Riverdale, NJ. The event pays homage to our ancestral heritage and shines a spotlight on our future with the next class of OCA-NJ Scholarship awardees. Over 80 guests gathered to enjoy good food, mingle with great company, and to cheer on our scholarship winners. This year's class was comprised of nine high school seniors from seven different high schools in New Jersey earning a total of \$13,500 in scholarship money funded by family foundations, generous donations, and fund-raising efforts. Guest speaker, Danica Lee, (past Robert E. Wone Scholarship recipient) spoke to the students about her college journey. She focused on the many activities and opportunities to seek out and engage in for both personal and professional development, and how hard work and a successful internship led her to a full-time position upon graduation. We send our best wishes and congratulations to this year's recipients: Elisa Cammarota, Micaela Cassidy, Alissa Eng, Audrey Kuo, Serena Lee, Meryl Li, Cinnamon Sanchez, Moses Yang, and Selina Zhu.

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President's Message



Dear OCA-NJ Chapter Members, Families and Friends,

The NJ Chapter would not have been able to continue its work throughout the many decades without the dedicated generous donations, support and services of our members and sponsors.

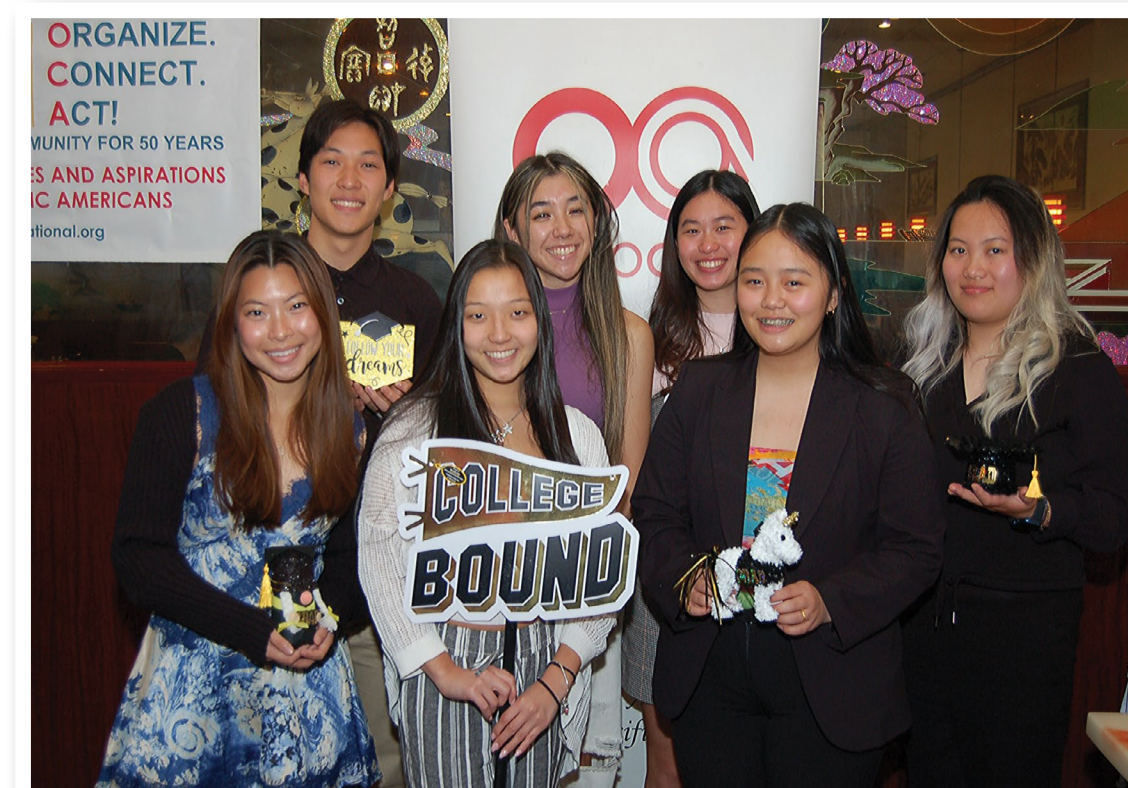
2023 has certainly been an exciting and eventful 50th anniversary

celebration so far, and it continues! Mark your calendars for our Annual Four Chapters Summer Picnic on September 16 and our Annual Holiday Ball on December 9!

OCA-NJ will be hosting this year's Four Chapters Summer Picnic. Enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs and pot luck dishes! Let's all gather for some laughter, fun and games, and be on the lookout for more event details!

Thank you for supporting OCA-NJ,

Henry Lee,
OCA-NJ Chapter President





New York City's 2nd Annual AAPI Cultural & Heritage Parade

May 21st NYC's 2nd Annual Asian American and Pacific Islander Cultural and Heritage Parade returned to Manhattan's Avenue of the Americas on May 21, 2023 to celebrate AAPI culture. Hosted by Better Chinatown U.S.A, the parade featured a wide variety of live performances, including singing, dancing, marching and many artistic displays created by the AAPI community. Home to the second-largest AAPI population in the country, NYC held in 2022 the inaugural parade to give the Asian-American community a chance to stand together as it faced an alarming rise in hate crimes. Mayor Eric Adams then said, "Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebrates New Yorkers who contribute to the rich culture that makes New York the greatest city in the world. As we work to combat a spike in hate crimes, it is important to support and uplift our AAPI brothers and sisters. We are proud to announce the New York City's first annual Asian American and Pacific Islander Cultural & Heritage Parade and pay tribute to the generations of New Yorkers from the Asian and Pacific diaspora."

At this year's parade, our sister chapters of OCA-New York, OCA-Long Island, OCA-New Jersey and OCA Westchester & Hudson Valley marched from 44th Street to 55th Street and

proudly displayed OCA's 50th anniversary banner with the theme "Organized, Connect & Act". This year is the 50th anniversary of OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocate—one of the nation's oldest AAPI social justice organizations. Anniversary will be officially celebrated at OCA's National Convention at the Capital Hilton in Washington D.C. on July 12-16, 2023.

Following closely behind the chapters and with a very animated dragon was the 10-person dragon dance team of Asian American Dragon & Lion Dance Association (AAD&L). It was the very first appearance of the AAD&L's red, white and blue dragon head designed by Vinh Bui and our very own Henry Lee, OCA-NJ Chapter President. This dragon was first featured at OCA-New Jersey's 2021 Lunar New Year Virtual Celebration, and Vinh and Henry presented the development of the dragon head with final design elements and details along the 56 feet dragon body.

The tradition of celebrating and performing at ceremonies using hand-made dragons date back to the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) when dragon acts were performed to worship ancestors and to pray for rain. Popularized by various folk dance dating back to the Ming Dynasty that carried over to the Qing Dynasty, the bamboo framed, cloth covered dragons can be traced back to the 1200s. The AAD&L team consisted of a dragon dance team and a small group of drummers that alternated drumming traditional Chinese drum beats. The 10-person dance team rhythmically moved the 60 ft, well adorned dragon in its inaugural debut to the beats produced by the drums similar to those used for lion dances—a tradition carried on for a thousand years. The dragon dance team traversed in a slow-running pace along the half-mile stretch of the parade route.

Many parade participants marched along or rode on floats as they supported AAPI groups, businesses, associations and organizations. Popping streamers and confetti filled the air at the celebration of the 2023 NYC 2nd Annual AAPI Cultural and Heritage Parade!

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An Evening of Celebration and Recognition

December 9th, 2023 The OCA-NJ Holiday Ball, an annual event hosted by the New Jersey Chapter of OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates, promises to be a night filled with celebration and recognition. On December 9, 2023, the Ball will honor two exceptional individuals for their outstanding contributions to society.

One of the honorees is Glenn D. Magpantay, a long-time civil rights attorney, professor of law and Asian American Studies, and LGBTQ rights activist. Glenn has recently been appointed to the United States Commission on Civil Rights due to his tireless advocacy for the rights of marginalized communities. This impactful appointment is a testament to his expertise and dedication.



The second honoree is Dr. Teik Lim, the esteemed 9th President of the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Dr. Lim is a Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering. Prior to joining NJIT on July 1, 2022, Dr. Lim led the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) as interim president from 2020-2022 and was Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at UTA from 2017-2020. Dr. Lim's visionary leadership is transforming NJIT into a renowned institution, fostering innovation and academic excellence.

In addition to celebrating these remarkable individuals, the OCA-NJ Holiday Ball offers sponsorship opportunities for businesses and organizations. Sponsors can showcase their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion while gaining exposure to a diverse and influential audience. From prominent branding opportunities to networking with community leaders, sponsoring the event is a chance to align with OCA-NJ's mission and support their vital work. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact EVP Eric Chau at eric@worldconsultinginc.com

Don't miss the OCA-NJ Holiday Ball 2023, where achievement, recognition, and unity take center stage!

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Partnerships to Support Our Community

OCA-New Jersey's mission is to advance the social, political and economic well-being of Americans of Chinese and Asian/Pacific Islander descent. The partnerships with communities' leaders and groups with common goals and purposes as our chapter's are critical to our work and to broadening our outreach across the state. Highlights so far in 2023—

February a significant earthquake devastated parts of Turkey and Syria. Paterson, NJ's Mayor Andre Sayegh launched a NJ Earthquake Relief Fund to provide direct support to families affected by the disaster. Paterson is home to large Turkish and Syrian communities. Mayor Sayegh is a community leader who OCA-NJ has partnered since 2021 to develop initiatives to assist Asian American owned local businesses by providing resources and guidance, and improving the communication they have with various city departments. To help in the Turkey & Syria earthquake relief efforts, OCA-NJ President, Henry Lee, Vice President, Eric Chau and Board Member, Jenny Lee, presented the Mayor with a donation to the NJ Earthquake Relief Fund.



May OCA-NJ's long time partner, the Chinese American Nurses Association (CANA) hosted its 25th Annual Fundraising Gala this past May. CANA's mission is to promote health awareness within the Chinese community through activities such as health fairs, workshops, nursing CE courses/credits, and scholarship awards for nursing students. Gala Honorees included distinguished members of the medical community and front-line Emergency Room Nursing staff from Elmhurst Hospital Center, Flushing Medical Center and New York-Presbyterian Queens. OCA-NJ was a sponsor of the Gala, and our Chapter President, Henry Lee, attended.

June Also a long time partner of OCA-NJ, The Center for Asian Health (CAH) at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center hosted a Chinese Wellness Day in June. This year's event theme was "Celebrating 10 years of Building a Healthy Community." Almost 200 attendees to the event had access to physician lectures, free screenings, demonstrations, "meet the physician" sessions. CAH is a comprehensive practice which offers culturally relevant primary care and a network of specialists with a focus on serving New Jersey's Asian population. The center includes bilingual physicians and staff in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean. OCA-NJ was a sponsor of the event.

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Congratulations
Chinese American Nurses Association

CANA 2023 Outstanding Honorees:

LIVING-AT-HOME MEDICAL
YIYUAN SUN, DNSc, CNE, RN
HENRY CHEN, MD

ELMHURST HOSPITAL CENTER
EMERGENCY ROOM NURSING STAFF
FLUSHING MEDICAL CENTER
EMERGENCY ROOM NURSING STAFF
NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN QUEENS
EMERGENCY ROOM NURSING STAFF

Henry Lee, President
Christine Braccino, Eric Chau, Wendy Chin, Maureen Farrell, Phillip Lam, Jenny Lee, L. Ray Lee, David T. Lin, John K. Tan

Laura J. Lee, Immediate Past President



OCA in the News

OCA National Center works with journalists to inform the public about Asian American and Pacific Islander issues. Send media inquiries to Communications Fellow Socheata Sun: socheata.sun@ocanational.org

The Diaspora Times: Asian American Media Alliance Restructures, Launches New Initiative To Amplify AANHPI Voices In Entertainment

Houston Chronicle: From war-torn Vietnam to building a ‘tribe’ in our Montrose nail salon

Deseret News: New exhibit highlights Corky Lee, who photographed Asian Americans in Utah and beyond

Institute for Local Self-Reliance: OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates Challenges ‘Model Minority’ Myth to Close Digital Access Gaps

Los Alamos Daily Post: U.S. Sen. Luján & Reps. Gallego, Hayes Introduce Grant Program To Empower Teacher Leaders

KWXX: Hirono, Meng Reintroduce Legislation to Promote AANHPI Studies In Public Schools

AsAmNews: Grace Meng: Quiet Asian American “rock star” of NY Politics

AsAmNews: OCA Celebrates 50th Anniversary. Asian Am Pioneers to be Honored

<https://www.ocanational.org/media-mentions>

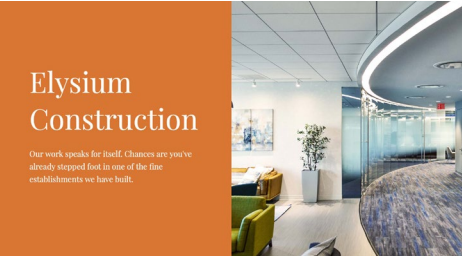
Join Us for the 4-Chapters/CAA Annual Summer Picnic

Saturday September 16th, 2023 at Van Saun County Park — Pavillion I

Come join OCA and Chinese Adoptee Alliance families for a day of fun — a great way to stay connected and meet other families. Save the date for Saturday, September 16, 2023 at Van Saun County Park in Paramus, NJ. This year’s Picnic will be hosted by OCA-NJ Chapter. The event is free and will have hot dogs, hamburgers, refreshments, potluck and activities for all.



Sponsored by the following:



Volunteer Opportunities

OCA-NJ Chapter hosts and/or sponsors many events each year. These events are possible due to the continuing support and hard work of our board, members and friends. We need more volunteers to help us, and if you would like to volunteer, please contact us at ocanj.events@gmail.com. Skills such as organization, planning, communication, networking, graphic design and most important, teamwork, are valuable to OCA-NJ achieving its mission and goals. You don’t need to be an OCA-NJ Chapter member to volunteer. Thank you for your interest and support!

Current roles seeking volunteers -

1. Project manage the compilation of the chapter’s Annual Holiday Ball Dinner Journal including receipt of journal page orders and content, organization of content into journal, and coordinate for the publishing of the journal.
2. Support OCA-NJ’s ACTION e-newsletter team with compilation and formatting of articles and photos into e-newsletter. Articles and photos are submitted to the team. See sample of e-newsletter at <https://www.oca-nj.org/>
3. Develop event flyers and marketing materials.

OCA



ACTION e-Newsletter

Volume 3, No. 5 is made possible with the following contributors:
Christine Braccino
Eric Chau
Wendy Chin
Laura Lee
John Tan



Mission Statement

OCA-New Jersey Chapter is a state chapter of OCA, a section 501(c)(3) national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States. Our goals are: (1) To advocate for social justice, equal opportunity and fair treatment. (2) To promote civic participation, education and leadership. (3) To advance coalitions and community building. (4) To foster cultural heritage. Founded in 1973 as the Organization of Chinese Americans, OCA maintains its headquarters in Washington, D.C. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

OCA’s PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Promoting active participation of Asian Pacific Americans in both civic and national matters;
- Securing the social justice, equal opportunity and equal treatment of Asian Pacific Americans;
- Eliminating prejudices, stereotypes and ignorance of Asian Pacific Americans, and;
- Promoting the cultural heritage of Chinese and Asian Pacific Americans

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