



NEW JERSEY

Embracing the Hopes & Aspirations of Asian Pacific Americans

ACTION

December 2022 Vol.3 No.4

OCA - New Jersey Holiday Ball

December 3rd OCA-New Jersey capped off 2022 with its annual Holiday Ball held at The Grand, in Totowa, NJ. Over 150 guests enjoyed a wonderful cocktail hour followed by a delicious dinner with music and dance.

The Holiday Ball is OCA-NJ's opportunity each year to recognize and honor AAPI individuals in our community. OCA-NJ posthumously honored and celebrated the lifetime achievements of Virginia Ng. Virginia was a longtime leader and supporter of OCA-NJ and the entire OCA national organization. She touched many lives through her friendship, her leadership, and her advocacy.

The 2022 Community Award honored the many contributions of Baayork Lee. Baayork has performed in Broadway shows and created the role of Connie in *A Chorus Line*, also serving as assistant choreographer on *A Chorus Line*, of which she has directed and choreographed many national and international companies. Through her non-profit National Asian Artists Project (NAAP — <https://www.naaproject.org/>), Baayork's vision includes educating, cultivating, and stimulating audiences and artists of Asian descent through the many outreach programs the company offers. After receiving her award, a surprised birthday cake was rolled out for Baayork and everyone joined in with a "Happy Birthday" song.



This year, a Cultural Arts Award was presented to Nai-Ni Chen posthumously and Andy Chiang. Nai-Ni Chen a long time supporter of OCA-NJ Chapter, was the founder, choreographer and artistic director of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. She was an artist recognized by the community not only as a tradition bearer but also an extraordinary artist dedicated to bridge the traditional and contemporary artistic worlds and empowering future generations. Her husband, Andy and the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company (<https://www.nainichen.org/>) continues that vision.



OCA-NJ's 2022 Unsung Hero was presented to Alyson Yee for her dedicated service and time to our chapter, including organizing the Holiday Ball!

The evening was rounded out with our annual gift baskets, silent auction, a holiday themed selfie station, and of course a lot of music, dancing and merry making. It was a great way to celebrate the year and a great way to kick off the holiday season. We thank all our members, friends, and sponsors for joining us in celebration and for your continued support. **Happy New Year!** **OCA**



President's Message

Dear OCA-NJ Chapter members,

The Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) was founded in 1973 by K.L. Wang and Alex Mark creating a unified platform for Chinese Americans in the civil rights movement. This year, 2023, marks the 50th anniversary since these two iconic men took bold actions to organize what is today the leading advocacy group representing Chinese and Asian Pacific Islanders.



OCA-NJ Chapter's Lunar New Year banquet at Noodle Wong's on Saturday, February 11, 2023, will be the first of a number of events also celebrating Kung Lee Wang, Alex Mark and all those who have followed in their footsteps to keep the vision alive. Visit our OCA-NJ website regularly for information on future events including the 4 Chapter and CAA Lunar New Year parade in New York City's Chinatown on February 12th, 2023.

Best wishes to you and your family in the year of the Black Water-Rabbit.

Henry Lee, OCA-NJ Chapter President





Holiday Gifting Cheer

Charles B. Wang Community Health Center

December 18th After a two year hiatus due to COVID-19, our Charles B. Wang Community Health Center (CBWCHC) *Christmas Gift Giving* project returned this year! On December 18, 2022, OCA NJ board members delivered Christmas gifts to the Pediatrics Department at CBWCHC in Manhattan Chinatown. Over 70 gifts

were bought through the generosity of OCA-NJ members and donations from OCA-NJ's 2020 COVID Community Fundraising to benefit NYC Chinatown.



Pre-pandemic, this was an annual service project for over 10 years. It was started by OCA-NJ board members, Linda and Ray Lee, with coordination assistance by Virginia Ng. Many of those who utilize the healthcare services at CBWCHC are part of vulnerable underserved socioeconomic, cultural and limited-English speaking background. Recognizing that many of these children and families may not have the means to experience holiday festivities, the goal of our *Christmas Gift Giving* service project was born. We received many heart-warming Thank You notes from the children for their gifts.

This year we also invited our OCA NJ general members and friends to participate in our service project. They were also able to contribute their own gifts to be given to CBWCHC pediatric participants. As we continue to bring the holiday spirit to those who may not have the means to experience it themselves, we look forward to next year for all our members and friends to take part in our wonderful *Christmas Gift Giving* service project to benefit the pediatric participants at CBWCHC.

Visiting Nurse Association Health Group

The holiday season may be a time of joy and cheer, but it can also be sadness and hopelessness to ill patients and their families. Throughout New Jersey, hundreds of patients and their families sit in hospitals and nursing homes. In an effort to help patients and their families over the holiday season, the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) Health Group runs a successful holiday program called "*Seasons of Hope.*" This program helps hundreds of patient families a year and has been held for 20 years.

Seasons of Hope allows people to anonymously "adopt" a patient family for the holidays. The goal is to help them accomplish their holiday tasks and give them a memorable Christmas. The donor family donates basic holiday needs, such as grocery store gift cards, clothing, toys and food. This holiday, OCA-NJ adopted two families who each have been impacted by COVID-19. With the donations from OCA-NJ's 2020 COVID Community Fundraising to benefit New Jersey, gifts were purchased for each family — including clothing, toys and food shopping gift cards.



VNA is one of the nation's largest nonprofit independent providers of home health, hospice and community-based care serving New Jersey and mid-central Ohio. For more than 100 years, VNA Health Group has assisted individuals and families in achieving their best level of well-being by providing compassionate, coordinated and innovative care in their homes and communities. **OCA**





Chapter Members Appreciation Luncheon

October 29th OCA-NJ hosted its Annual Chapter Members Appreciation Luncheon on October 29 at Noodle Wong in Parsippany, NJ. As members old and new enjoyed tasty dim sum dishes, member Linda Woo shared a brief video clip of 2022 Holiday Ball Honoree: Baayork Lee. Baayork Lee is an American actress, singer, dancer, choreographer, theater director, and author. Lee was born in New York City's Chinatown and started dancing at an early age. She is the co-founder of National Asian Artists Project (NAAP), a not-for-profit organization that recognizes the need to build bridges between the work of artists of Asian descent, and the many communities that the work can serve, from underserved primary school students to seasoned arts patrons. To support and learn more about NAAP: <https://www.naaproject.org/>

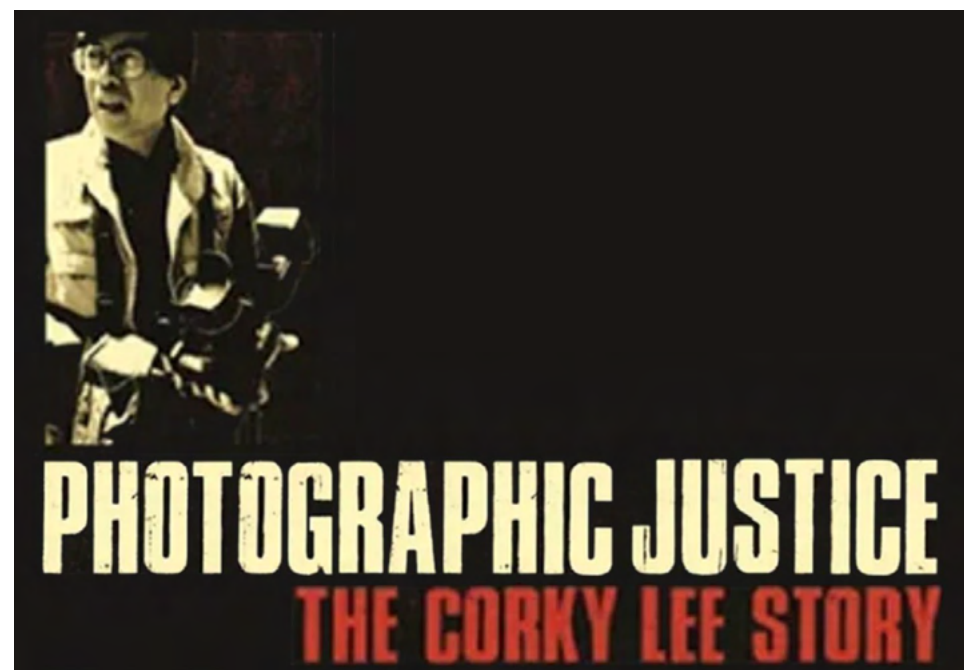


The luncheon concluded with raffle prizes including framed poster and tickets to see the Premiere of "Photographic Justice- Corky Lee Story". Born in Queens, Corky Lee, for a half-century, had been documenting New York City's Asian

American community. His photos show the little-known struggle of Asians in America, including civil rights protests, racist immigration legislation, and violence towards Sikhs and Muslims of Asian descent since 9/11. To watch the documentary and learn more:

<https://photographicjustice.com/>

OCA



Remembering Private Danny Chen

Top Left: Activist Annie Tan, cousin of Vincent Chin



Bottom Left: OCA-Long Island Chapter President Tommy Ong



Top Right: Members of American Legion LT. Kim Lau Post 1291 paying tribute to Pvt. Danny Chen at the 11th anniversary of the remembrance of his death



Center Right: Member of American Legion LT. Kim Lau Post 1291 and OCA-LI Chapter President Tommy Ong

Bottom Right: OCA-NY Liz OuYang holds a moment of silence while the beat of the ceremonial drum beats 30 times, an indication of how old Pvt. Danny Chen would be



Bottom Center: Activists, elected city officials and members of the American Legion LT. Kim Lau Post 1291 gather for the 11th Anniversary Remembrance of Pvt. Danny Chen



Brian Chen: An AAPI's Perspective

“Without (your) culture, you lose your identity.” Thoughtful words from Brian Chen, OCA-NJ's 2022 Virginia L. Ng Scholarship awardee.



A New Jersey resident and freshmen at University of Maryland majoring in fire protection engineering, Brian embraces his Chinese culture and heritage in his daily life. He says that it's a natural part of being him. He has a great passion for lion dancing, enjoys learning to cook Chinese cuisine (lamb specialty) and has taken Mandarin language lessons. Brian also recently became Eagle Scout which is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Scouts BSA program of the Boy Scouts of America. Brian acknowledges that his family's values and traditions play a large role in instilling and keeping the connection through the generations.

He recognizes, however, that it's challenging during current times of racial tensions for Chinese in America and their culture to be welcomed and understood. Brian believes that in addition to the COVID pandemic, the geopolitics between China and America are impacting peoples' views of the Chinese with mistrust and misinformation. Other AAPI groups like the Japanese and Korean have faced extreme racism in America history, and now seem to be viewed more positively from appealing social media, pop culture and mainstream accepted products like anime, k-pop and Hello Kitty. In sharing with others (including other Asian Americans) his passions, views and information about Chinese culture and heritage, responses are mixed — no desire to know, or not popular in American culture.



Above: Henry Lee, Brian Chen and Laura Lee presenting the inaugural Virginia L. Ng Founder's Scholarship

Right: As an Eagle Scout, Brian achieves the highest rank attainable in the Scouts BSA program of the Boy Scouts of America

“Legislation that promotes the representation of all Americans of all background is essential...”



He is glad to see that AAPI contributions and their roles in American history are required now in New Jersey school curriculums. As his scholarship essay said, “Legislation that promotes the representation of all Americans of all backgrounds is essential because it creates a more informed and aware society.” In addition to formal education like this, Brian also believes that there needs to be practical ways in daily life to attract and increase America's awareness and understanding of the Chinese, their culture and traditions, and from that hopefully, acceptance and appreciation. Perhaps his idea of starting a lion dance group at his college may be a proactive step towards that!

OCA in the News <https://www.ocanational.org/media-mentions>

OCA National Center works with journalists to inform the public about Asian American and Pacific Islander issues. Send media inquiries to Communications Associate Andrew Peng: andrew.peng@ocanational.org.

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

Politico: Meet The Democrats' AAPI Outreach Guru

Vox: Racism is keeping many Asian Americans from going to the doctor

AsAmNews: AAPI leaders organizing march on Washington

The List: The History Behind Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

CBS 8: The History of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

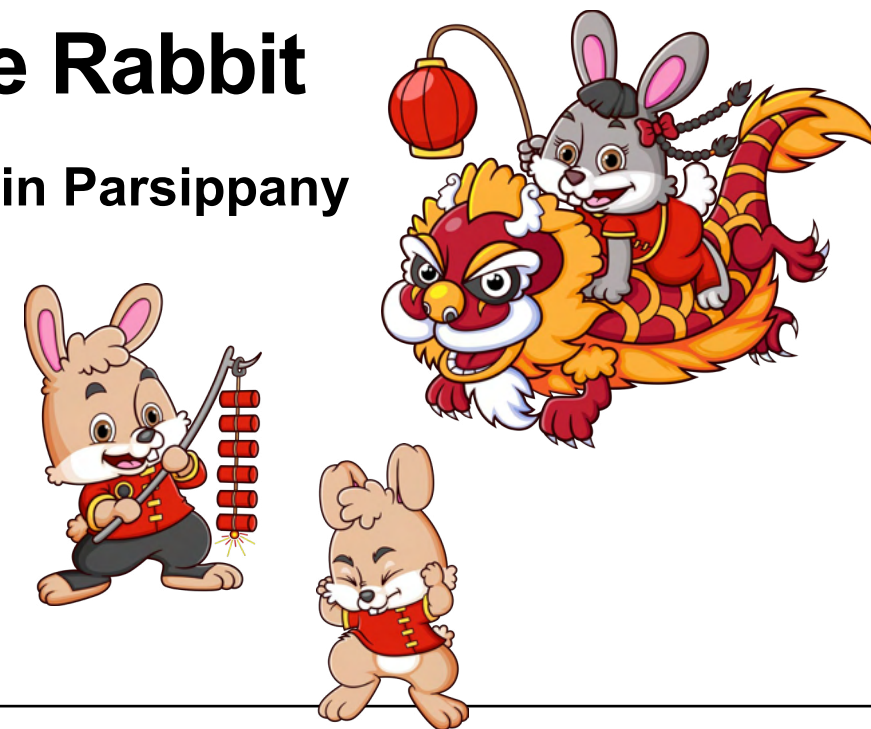
Acting Attorney General Platkin announces leadership team

News12 Westchester: Woman credited with proposal to designate month to Asian heritage part of organization with Hudson Valley ties

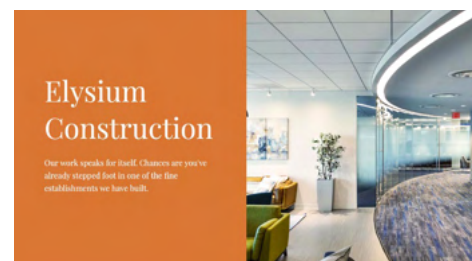
Join Us in Celebrating the Year of the Rabbit

Saturday February 11, 2023 at Noodle Wong Restaurant in Parsippany

Come and celebrate the Year of the Rabbit with us at Noodle Wong Restaurant at 770 Route 46 West, Parsippany, NJ 07054 on Saturday February 11, 2023 from 6:00PM-9:30PM. Enjoy traditional Chinese lion dance performance followed by a Lunar New Year Dinner. For additional information, e-mail: alyocanjboard@gmail.com or www.oca-nj.org For online payments & major credit cards: <https://t.ly/0dyCn>



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. 4 is made possible with the following contributors:
Christine Braccino
Wendy Chin
Theresa Chan
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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