OCA: Who We Are

The Westchester-Hudson Valley chapter of OCA (OCA-WHV) is one of the oldest ethnic advocacy organizations in the tristate region. Our core mission is social advocacy on behalf of all Asian Pacific Islanders (API), local and nationwide. We are proud to have played a major part in influencing national opinion in landmark cases such as that of Private Danny Chen and former NYC police officer Peter Liang.

We work tirelessly to eliminate hate speech, to lobby for criminal justice reform and to support national legislation regarding immigration reform and anti-hazing in the military.

We are constantly at work to develop new outreach programs in the large and growing Asian immigrant population in the region, particularly among Asian seniors. Our thriving youth program recognizes gifted student leaders as well as talented youth facing hardship or need. And we continue to build strong coalitions to sister organizations such as Families with Children from China.

Get involved! Join OCA!

(See membership details on back cover)

OCA Youth Gets Out the Vote

H Mart Asian Supermarket in White Plains, NY, was the scene of a spirited voter registration campaign on September 24, 2016, led by young activists from the Westchester-Hudson Valley chapter of OCA. Representatives from Young OCA (YOCAA) worked side-by-side with Board Officers to distribute literature, to buttonhole unregistered voters and help them fill out forms. Among them were Raymond Zheng, Yvonne Liu, Matthew Tu, Ben Shi, Victor Cai and Jason Li.

Though APIs are the fastest growing ethnic group in America, registration numbers and ballot turnout are disappointingly low. To address voter apathy at the grass-roots level, our chapter called out the troops to join OCA National’s 2016 campaign to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) in time for the November elections. Some chapter members went to the National Convention in Jersey City with the specific

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May Lai, past Executive VP, cuts the cake, as Board Members lift their glasses at the 2015 Gala to toast the 35th Anniversary of our chapter.

OCA-WHV Executive Board 2016

Peggy Chen — President
Gary Guo— Immediate Past-President
Jenny Kho, Li Lin, Grace Pan — Co-Executive VPs
Linda Ching Sledge— Secretary
Grace Pan— Treasurer
Jaclyn Liu— VP Membership and Webmaster
Meow Yee, Vincent Young— Co-VPs Development
Sinforosa Tan Kaung— VP Communications & Public Relations
David Chen, Daniel Lewis, Helen Tang— Co-VPs Community Outreach
William Kaung— VP Advocacy
Jin Li, Li Lin, Grace Pan— Co-VPs Programs & YOCAA
Jean Chang, Howard Chen, Shuyi Xiao, Xin Zheng, Christine Zhao— Directors-at-Large
Mark Fang— Legal Counsel

OCA-WHV 2017 Calendar

February: Westchester Chinese New Year Festival
The largest Chinese New Year cultural celebration in the Hudson Valley. (New Rochelle H.S.)

April: Rising Stars Musical Competition and Concert
A showcase for the talents of gifted young API musicians, featuring music and instruments from east and west. (Chappaqua Library Auditorium)

June: Asian American Heritage Festival
Kick-off to the County's free summer program of ethnic festivals, attracting 7,000 County residents. The Festival is an all-day family-friendly event, presenting experts in traditional Asian dance and song and masters of the martial arts. (Kensico Dam Plaza, White Plains)

July: OCA and FCC Joint Membership Picnic
Potluck, BBQ, face-painting and fun for all ages at the annual mid-summer picnic for chapter members and guests. Our partner in the festivities are our friends at Families with Children from China. (Croton Point Park)

September: Four-Chapter OCA and FCC Picnic
Long Island and New Jersey chapters and Families with Children from China join us for a Labor Day outdoor celebration. (Van Saun Park, NJ)

October: Meet the Candidates Forum
Candidates for political office engage in spirited discussion with API voters and members of local community organizations. (Pace U, Pleasantville)

November: The Dynamic Achievers Award Gala
Our chapter’s valentine to our community, honoring the best and brightest APIs in the Hudson Valley. Past DAAs include filmmaker Ang Lee, AIDS researcher Dr David Ho, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Sheryl WuDunn, Student Leadership Awardees and recipients of the Jeannette Wang and Avon Xiaochun Luo Awards are also recognized. (DoubleTree Hotel, Tarrytown)

December: Annual Membership Meeting
Dinner, socializing and brief annual meeting featuring the swearing-in of the new Executive Board. All members are welcome. (TD Bank, Scarsdale Branch)
On July 21 to 24, OCA National held its 2016 Convention in Jersey City, taking as its theme “Forging Ahead: Legacy, Advocacy, Action.” Over 400 delegates gathered to study and discuss the most pressing issues affecting Asian Pacific Islanders today and to develop strategies for affecting change. Of particular interest to our chapter in our year-long drive to get out the vote (GOTV) was OCA National’s training sessions on election reform.

OCA-WHV President Peggy Chen led a large, enthusiastic contingent from our chapter which included David Chen, VP for Community Outreach; Pablo Cue, past chapter president, who drove up from Florida; and Raymond Zheng, YOCAA president, who has helped lead our chapter’s work in criminal justice reform.

Delegates from our chapter had a special reason for attending: to honor Board Member Daniel Lewis, who received one of three Unsung Heroes Awards given each year by OCA National for distinguished service. Dan’s award was won in part for building coalitions with other groups, among them, Families with Children from China. FCC representatives attended the National Conference this year for the first time and sponsored workshops on youth identity that drew a crowd.

In Loving Memory  Ting-fun May Lai

Ting-fun May Lai, distinguished social work professional, veteran OCA-WHV Executive Board Member, woman of faith, passed away in February, 2016. In her 20+ years on the Executive Board, May played many pivotal roles, among them, Executive Vice-President and most recently, co-chair of the 35th Anniversary Gala in 2015, just 3 months before her passing. May will be remembered by her OCA family with gratitude and admiration for her work ethic, her vibrant personality, her deeply-held convictions and her ability to speak for those families in the Chinese community who cannot speak for themselves.

“... these three remain, faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”
I Corinthians 13:13
In response to the racial tensions created by the tragic shooting of Akai Gurley, a young black man, by rookie NYC police officer Peter Liang, OCA-Westchester Hudson Valley (OCA-WHV) hosted a dialogue between concerned citizens from local Black and Asian communities to discuss common issues of social justice. Co-sponsor of the April 26, 2016 event was the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in White Plains, NY.

The forum was organized by Mark C. Fang, Westchester County Human Rights Commissioner and Counsel to the OCA-WHV Executive Board, and Dr. Xin Zheng, past president of OCA-WHV. Bill Kaung, former chapter president, and Raymond Zheng, chapter representative from Young OCA, were also on the organizing team.

Fang noted that the purpose of the meeting was to engage the local Chinese and Black communities in an “extraordinary conversation on race ... following a blueprint originally set forth by President Obama in response to the Trayvon Martin verdict in July, 2014.”

Gurley’s death was, at the time, the third in a row of high profile police shootings of young black men nationwide. Tensions between the Black and Chinese-American communities after the Gurley shooting, exacerbated by intense media scrutiny, had built for over a year during which Liang was removed from the police force, tried, convicted and sentenced. African-American advocacy groups sought transparent review and just sentencing of all police officers. The Asian community was somewhat divided, with many Chinese believing that Liang was scapegoated.

Interest in the case ran particularly high among the more than 50 participants at the OCA-WHV forum since Liang had been sentenced days before. However, the discussion at the Thomas Slater Center in White Plains, NY, was not simply to dissect the Gurley/Liang case. Instead, Fang, who presided over the meeting, urged attendees to explore the racial dynamics between Black and Asian communities, to build upon their history as civil rights allies and to find ways to work together in order to “generate better understanding between races.”

The dialogue that took place was personal, candid and impassioned. Many attendees were surprised at the wide diversity within each ethnic community. Some in the Black community did not know the “difference” between a Korean judge and a Chinese police officer, expressing the fear of possible bias. Kaung, who lectures widely on Chinese-American history, emphasized to African-American attendees that Asians are “not the same” but come from “different cultures, religions and geographic backgrounds” just as American Blacks do.
The evening ended on an encouraging note. “While we did not feel that Westchester County has the same negative conflicts between Blacks and Asians” as portrayed in some media accounts of the Gurley/Liang case, Kaung concluded that, “we all agreed there is a need to have more communication between the two communities in Westchester and more discussions of this type.”

In trenchant and compassionate closing remarks, the Hon. Kathie E. Davidson, Supervising Judge of the Westchester Family Court, an African-American, called for future meetings to address the common concerns of Asians and African-Americans arising from their mutual histories of racial bias and their shared vision of social justice. Echoing Judge Davidson, Peggy Chen, current president of OCA-WHV, called for greater chapter involvement with the local African-American community, especially in the area of criminal justice reform.

Linda Ching Sledge  (This article appeared in IMAGE Magazine, July 2016)
DYNAMIC ACHIEVERS GALA
November 2015
Co-chairs: May Lai, Peggy Chen, Rose Tan Kaung

(Photos: Chester Mah)
ASIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

May 2016

Co-chairs: Jin Li, Grace Pan, Jenny Kho

(photos: Chester Mah)
Youth Gets Out the Vote

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purpose of attending the voter registration training sessions (see photo below) held by election professionals for volunteers like us. One happy result was the empowering of our youth who proved particularly effective in convincing other young Asians to register and participate in the voting process.

Xin Zheng, GOTV chair, reported that seven voter registration drives throughout the year yielded 61 new voters and countless numbers of re-energized voters who were already registered. Zheng observed that the GOTV program served our chapter as a “prime opportunity to show that OCA really cares about the political process and the socioeconomic well being of all Asians in America.”

Statistics about API Voters

• Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial group in the United States, according to U.S. Census data, nearly doubling their share of the electorate in the past decade.

• There are 19.5 million APIs in the United States, 5.6% of the population. But there were just 2 million API voters in 2000, and 3.9 in 2012.

• The 2016 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) shows that Asian American registered voters are increasingly identifying as Democrats, a 12% increase since 2012.

• Asked to name the most important problem facing the United States, Asians ranked the economy first, national security second and racial discrimination third.

JOIN OCA-WHV.
The organization that advOCAtes for all APIs

Family Membership: $50 for one year, $90 for 2 years or $180 for 5 years
Individual Membership: $40 for one year, $70 for 2 years or $140 for 5 years
Senior Membership (65 or older): $20 for one year, $30 for 2 years or $60 for 5 years
Youth/Student: $10 per year
Lifetime Membership: $1,000 (individual) or $1,500 (family)

Download a membership Application Form from our Website: http://www.oca-whv.org
Or contact us by mail at:

OCA-WHV
P.O. Box 541
White Plains, NY 10602-0541
(Email: info@oca-whv.org)