



# SPOTLIGHT

News and events from OCA Westchester-Hudson Valley



## May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month, but OCA-WHV celebrates all year!

April and May 2024 were busy months in a busy year for OCA Westchester-Hudson Valley! In just two months, we planned and participated in a packed calendar: four Asian movie nights, a dance night, multiple advocacy events, senior events, and coalition building events. We received awards, wrote grants, and even launched our new website and newsletters... helped by the brilliant and industrious interns of Young OCA (YOCA).

In addition to our own events, OCA-WHV members were in demand at countless events by our friends and allies, such as Ardsley's and the India Center of Westchester's Holi celebrations, the YWCA's "In the Company of Women" gala, and Ardsley's first AAPI Festival. We sent marchers south again to the 3rd annual

AAPI parade in NYC. On the same day, we traveled north to support the first AAPI Festival held in Rockland County!

We're kicking off June with our annual Westchester County Asian Heritage Festival. For 27 years, the popular AHF has attracted thousands of residents sharing the art, food, and culture of Westchester's AAPI communities.

Please check out our calendar, follow us on social, and subscribe to our email list! Share and find out news about Asian holiday festivals, markets, classes, advocacy, and more!

The Hudson Valley is becoming a great place to enjoy Asian American culture. Join OCA-WHV and help us get even better!

### OCA: Who We Are

The Westchester-Hudson Valley chapter of OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA-WHV) is one of the oldest ethnic advocacy organizations of the tristate region. Our core mission is social advocacy on behalf of all Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), local and nationwide.

We work tirelessly to eliminate hate and promote caring, to lobby for safety, immigration and criminal justice reform, and advocate for recognition of AAPI history and contributions.

We are constantly at work to develop new outreach programs in the large and growing Asian immigrant population in the region. Our thriving youth program (Young OCA) supports gifted student leaders as well as talented youth facing hardship or need. We continue to build strong coalitions with sister organizations.

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## Calendar of Upcoming Asian-American Events

**May 30, 9:30am:** Westchester County Center in White Plains, Salute to Seniors

**May 30, 5:30pm:** Hastings library, Teens Speak

**June 1, 12-6pm:** **27th Annual Asian-American Heritage Festival at Kensico Dam.**

**June 2, 1-4pm:** Scarsdale Library Bollywood movie “Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara” and Mehndi

**June 15, 2-4pm:** Scarsdale Library Chinese movie “Youth”

**July 2:** Pan OCA Pepsi AAPI Youth Career Day

**July 11-14:** 51st OCA National Convention “Stronger Together” in Philadelphia

**Sept 7:** Ridge Road Park in Hartsdale, NY **OCA Four-Chapter and CAA Summer Family Picnic.** We are hosting this year!

**November 16, 6-10pm,** Surf Club on the Sound (New Rochelle): **Annual OCA-WHV Gala. Save the date! New location!**

**November 21, 5:00-8:00 pm:** Mid- Autumn Festival “Moon Cake Night Market” at the ArtsWestchester in White Plains, OCA-WHV and Greenburgh Evergreen Club as Community Partners.

**Scan the QR code on this page to visit our website [oca-whv.org](http://oca-whv.org) for more details, to RSVP, and sign up for our email newsletter.**



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## 2024 OCA-WHV Executive Board

*President:* Jaclyn Liu

*VP of Development:*  
Bhavana Pahwa

*Co-Executive VP:* Eric Cheng, Jane Li, Dan Lewis

*VP of Education/Cultural Affairs:* Li Lin

*Secretary:* Jane Li

*VP of Membership:*  
Grace Pan

*Treasurer:* Li Lin

*VP of Public Relations:*  
Kasama Star

*Immediate Past President:* Jin Li

*VP of Youth Programs:* Bing Dang

*VP of Advocacy:*  
Daniel Lewis

*Legal Counsel:* Eric G. Cheng

*VP of Communications:*  
Howard Chen

*Webmaster/ Newsletter:* Jeanhee Chung

*VP of Community Outreach:* Peggy Chen

*Director at large:*  
Jenny Kho

*VP of Diversity and Inclusion:* Meow Yee



## Project Committee Chairs

Asian Heritage Festival: Vincent Young  
Board member nomination: Dan Lewis

DAA nomination: Li Lin

Endowment: Howard Chen

Gala: Eric Cheng

Meet the Candidates: Gary Guo

Mental Health Access Project: Dan Lewis

Mid-Autumn Festival: Rose Tan Kaung

New Bridges Coalition: Jeanhee Chung

Retreat: Meow Yee

Youth Leadership Awards:

Edward Lam/Jean Chang

**Interns:** Kaya Sasaki and Allegra Kong





## ADVOCACY

### AAPI Curriculum in New York

Will New York be the next state to pass an AAPI curriculum bill? Good news could be on the way!

Seeking to stop anti-Asian hate, a consortium of Asian American groups, including OCA-WHV, have combined to urge New York lawmakers to join twelve states (NJ, CT, IL, WI, FL, CA, CO, NE, NV, OR, RI, and UT) with statutes that require an AAPI Studies curriculum. Last November 15, local AAPI leaders, including County Legislator David Imamura, Assemblyman Nader Sayegh, Vikas Agrawal of Ardsley School Board, Marjorie Hsu, chair of the Asian American Advisory Board, and OCA-WHV board members **Bill Kaung** and **Bhavana Pahwa**, spoke out before the County Diwali celebration in support of passing Sen. John Liu's **Senate Bill 5963A for AANHPI Education**. It recently passed unanimously on the NY Senate Floor, guided by Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and NY State Senator Shelley Mayer of Westchester. Let's work together to pass it in the state Assembly and get it signed by the Governor!



### First AAPI Summit Held in Albany

On May 9th, 2024, the 1st Annual AAPI Summit drew more than 300 Asian Americans from across New York State to discuss and advocate for solutions to various issues impacting our communities. The Summit, organized by the New York State Assembly Asian Pacific American Task Force, featured several workshops hosted by various elected officials. OCA - WHV members presented a panel discussion on "Social Isolation in the AAPI Community" which was hosted by NY Assembly Member Chris Burdick and organized by Heather Meiko Lackey. Panel members were Westchester County Legislator David Imamura, OCA member **Dr. Teresa Hsu**, NY Senator Kevin Thomas, and OCA Board Member **Dr. Bhavana Pahwa** (pictured).



### Make Us Visible NY

On May 19, Make Us Visible NY held a community event at the Scarsdale library to raise awareness of the struggle to see Asian American history taught in schools, and to rally support for the passage of the bill in New York. After their presentation, there was a lively discussion by students, tabling for activities, and Asian food. Legislator David Imamura was a guest speaker. Board member **Eric Cheng** represented OCA-WHV, which cosponsored the event.

### Better Together: New Bridges Coalition Diversity and Inclusion Lunch and Learn

On April 21 at Ridge Road Park in Hartsdale, fifty members from the seven New Bridges Coalition organizations met and bonded over the food of many cultures. The goal of the event was for the attendees, who came from different races and backgrounds, to make friends with people that didn't look like them and find out that we all have points of commonality. Each of nine tables had discussion questions that got people to think (cont. on page 4)



## AAPI Events in the Hudson Valley: April and May 2024



### OCA Dance Party

Saturday, May 4, was OCA's annual dance night! A groovy time was had by all, including some new members. The Chinese school dance teacher was our DJ. Thank you to **Grace Pan** for organizing!



### Seniors' Craft Circle in Mt. Vernon

To build community, OCA-WHV helped organize a first-ever Craft Circle for the seniors of Sunnybrook and Intown Towers in Mt. Vernon. Chacha Menzel, from the management of Sunnybrook and Intown Towers, graciously supplied the room, coffee, and snacks, while OCA board member **Jeanhee Chung** supplied hors d'oeuvres, yarn, needles, and patterns. The seniors (hailing from Korea, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Mt Vernon) introduced themselves to each other and enjoyed chatting, as they knitted and crocheted. The event was such a success that the seniors have decided that they will meet on a regular basis!



### Rockland County

On May 19, 2024, the first ever Asian Heritage festival in Rockland County was held. State Senator Weber attended to hand out awards to the local High School Valedictorians and Salutatorians. Rockland County Legislator Aney Paul, the first Indian American to become a legislator in

Rockland, was also a guest of honor. There were several Asian cultural performances -- Taiko Drum, quartet, dances, kungfu demonstration and a lion dance. **Jane Nguyen**, a long time member of OCA-WHV, organized this exciting event, which drew hundreds of attendees from far and wide.



(New Bridges, cont from p. 3) about issues of racism, belonging, and how to build relationships with others of different backgrounds. We observed wonderful interactions at each and every table.

The event also honored the late **Robert "Bob" Shyun-Jing Chao**, our past OCA-WHV president, and one of the founders of the New Bridges Coalition. His vision was to create and nurture cordial ties of friendship among the Asian American, African American, and the many other diverse groups in our community.

The [New Bridges Coalition](http://newbridgescoalition.org) is a joint project of several not-for-profit groups in the Greater New York area, including OCA-WHV, African-American Men of Westchester, the Japanese American Association of New York, India Center of Westchester, NAACP Greenburgh-White Plains, The Urban League of Westchester, and Westchester County Human Rights Commission. As well, guests from Sikhs of Westchester and Yonkers Gurdwara joined us and added to the richness and diversity of experiences represented that day. Learn more at [newbridgescoalition.org](http://newbridgescoalition.org)





## YOUNG OCA Already making the world a better place

Our year round program for high school students continues! Our student interns perform valuable volunteer work for our events as well as develop their own initiatives.

Special recognition goes to YOCA's officers **Ashley Dang** (President), **David Duan** (Vice President) and **Sophie Xie** (Secretary). Other teens who have contributed greatly this year are **Jayden Cao** (Westchester Asian Film Alliance), **Kaya Sasaki** and **Allegra Kong** (they developed OCA's new website and newsletter).



Returning summer volunteer programs for YOCA include: Slater Food Pantry, the popular YOCA Podcast and Summer Reading Program for kids; as well as these exciting new initiatives for 2024:

- Pepsico Youth Career Day on July 2
- Service at Lifting Up Westchester Shelter, Bowling and Escape Room with youth from our New Bridges Coalition partners

Please contact our VP of Youth Programs, Dr. Bing Dang at [bdang@oca-whv.org](mailto:bdang@oca-whv.org) if you have a teen interested in joining this group of outstanding and motivated youth!



### Presidential Volunteer Service Awards

Thanks to the hard work of **Dr. Bing Dang**, our VP of Youth Programs, OCA-WHV is now a Certifying Organization for President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA). Volunteers as young as ages 5-10, 11-15, 16-25, and up to adults 26+ may participate in the program which offers recognition for dedicated service. Additional information may be found at: <https://presidentalserviceawards.gov>



### OCA-WHV Student Awards

Every year at our autumn gala, OCA-WHV gives merit awards to high school seniors who are of Asian descent or non-Asians who demonstrate a keen interest in Asian language and culture, as well as fulfill varying criteria, such as need, service, academic excellence, or leadership. Learn more at [oca-whv.org/student-awards](https://oca-whv.org/student-awards)! Applications and details for 2024 will be released soon.

## Honored Community Leaders in Westchester: Bill and Rose Kaung

On April 18, 2024, **William (Bill) and Sinforosa (Rose) Kaung**, our esteemed and beloved OCA WHV leaders, were honored at Pace University's Awards Celebration, where they were recognized with Changemaker Awards for their work as Community Volunteer Leaders and Advocates. The happy event was held at the Kanopi at the Opus Hotel in White Plains, NY.



Previously on November 8, Bill and Rose were also honored with the Community Leadership Award at Westchester Community College Foundation's "Transforming Futures Together" Gala at Tappan Hill. At this time, they endowed a scholarship at SUNY WCC, the Dr. Sinforosa (Rose) Tan Scholarship, allowing Rose's dedication to students to continue to perpetuity. Vanessa Williams was the emcee at this elegant event, and Con Edison was the presenting sponsor.

Rose also received special distinction at the 41st Annual Senior Citizens Hall of Fame Awards Celebration, held on December 1 at the Westchester Marriott.

Bill and Rose were celebrated for their leadership at various nonprofits, community organizations and educational institutions which includes Westchester Community College, the Greenburgh Evergreen Club, NYSigN, ADO, HVCC, We Are Westchester, and the Old Guard of White Plains. In addition, the power couple have been active members of the New York Immigration Coalition, New Bridges Coalition, Phi Lambda Westchester, Pi Lambda Theta International Honor & Professional Association in Education,



Philippine Library Materials Foundation, and countless others.

As lifetime members of the OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates, Westchester and Hudson Valley Chapter, Bill and Rose have held various positions on the Executive Board for over 20 years, including past President of OCA-WHV, Vice President of Finance & Member of the Executive Council of OCA National (Bill) and recipient of the OCA National Unsung Hero Volunteer Award (Rose) for consistently going beyond the call of duty and working behind the scenes to advancing many causes and programs on behalf of the OCA and their communities.



*Congratulations, Bill and Rose!! We are very lucky to have your dynamic and caring duo in our community!*



## AAPI Film Screenings in Westchester



### Photographic Justice - The Corky Lee Story

On May 23, 2024, 60 people came to the White Plains library to watch the film "Photographic Justice" (premiering this month on PBS) about Asian American photographer, historian, and activist, Corky Lee. It was followed by a fascinating question and answer session with the director, producer, and executive producer. It was a moving tribute to a great Asian American Hero who advocated for every Asian American ethnic group. Thanks to Tejash Sanchala of the Westchester Human Rights Commission and **Daniel Lewis** of OCA Board for organizing!



### K-TOWN '92

On May 21, 2024, OCA-WHV collaborated with White Plains library to present their third annual AAPI documentary for Asian Heritage Month. The evening began with a viewing of the short documentary "K-TOWN '92: Reporters" by Korean American filmmaker Grace Lee, who interviewed four Los Angeles Times staffers about their coverage of the Los Angeles riots 25 years before. The audience then toured the interactive project K-Town '92, a website offering hundreds of short interviews of eyewitnesses from many backgrounds. The audience considered the genesis of the uprising and the role of media bias in the coverage of the events of 1992.

### Wolf Totem | Zero to Hero

The Westchester Asian Film Alliance at Scarsdale Library regularly attracts a packed, lively audience of residents from Westchester.

The featured film for April was "Wolf Totem" (2015). Based on the semi-autobiographical novel by the same name, the film tells the story of an urban student during the Chinese Cultural Revolution who travels to Inner Mongolia to teach shepherds about agriculture. During his stay, he forms bonds with the local people and becomes fascinated by the wolves roaming the grasslands.

Reflecting on the experiences of the "sent-down youths" in Mongolia prompts us to contemplate humanity, the relationship between humans and nature, and Chinese culture/history. The movie's usage of real and living wolves during the filming process is another element worth highlighting. After the movie ended, many people stayed and shared their insights. One audience member said, "It's the first time I've watched a movie related to the life of youth during the Cultural Revolution. It was excellent. I hope the next event comes sooner."

In May, the film "Zero to Hero" (2021) was presented. Related to the theme of mother's day and mother appreciation, the film is based on the true story of Su Hua Wei, a medal-winning Paralympian from Hong Kong. With his mother's help, Su Hua Wei battled against his disabilities and ultimately became the first athlete from Hong Kong to win the gold medal at the Paralympic Games.

This monthly event was founded in 2023 by YOCA member **Jayden Cao**, who organizes it with the assistance of Vice President of OCA-WHV Youth Programs and the Scarsdale Public Library. With OCA-WHV's continuous support, this event takes place on the second or third Saturday afternoon every month. Traditional Asian snacks are served. For information about future screenings, please visit the OCA-WHV or Scarsdale Public Library websites.







Join OCA-WHV.  
The organization that advOCates  
for all AAPIs.

- 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 (age 65+): \$20 for one year, \$30 for 2 years, or \$60 for 5 years
- Youth/Student Membership: \$10 per year
- Lifetime Membership: \$1000 (individual) or \$1500 (family)

Scan the QR code above or go to our website <http://oca-whv.org> to find our membership application form, or contact us by mail at:

OCA-WHV, P.O. Box 541, White Plains, NY 1060

or, contact us by email at: [info@oca-whv.org](mailto:info@oca-whv.org)

### Donate now to help OCA to continue our programs and advocacy!

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