



ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO

"ONE VISION, MANY VOICES"

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[THE LUNAR
BANQUET](#)

[MEDIA](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[MEMBERS](#)

[FUTURE MEETING
DATES & AGENDA](#)

[DOWNLOAD FORMS](#)

[NEWS](#)

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)

[ARCHIVES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

HISTORY

ASIAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL - THEN AND NOW

In October 1992, Congress has amended Public Law 102-450, which was approved by President George Bush, to permanently designate the month of May each year as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, to honor the achievements and contributions of Asian Pacific Americans.

The 1st Asian American Festival at the Daley Plaza has its origin in a festival and parade held on June 4-5, 1999. It was organized by Asian American leaders led by Dr. Evelyn DeAsis Natividad, as festival chair, and Mr. Prem Lalvani, as parade chair. The event was generously supported by Mr. James Law, then with the City of Chicago Director of Special Events, in collaboration with the Commission on Human Relations Advisory Affairs, and the Asian American Coalition of Chicago. The two-day festival included cultural dances, music, food, crafts and activities, as well as the colorful display of floats and marches. Mayor Richard Daley and other dignitaries and officials graced the event.

The 2nd Asian American Festival was held on May 17-19, 2000, and was hosted by the Korean American Community, chaired by Woo Sung Park of the Korean American Association of Chicago, with Kyun Hee Park as honorary chair.

Since then, the festival has evolved and garnered increasing support from community organizations and individuals. It became a week long, outdoor celebration showcasing Asian American culture and contributions to the mainstream society. It includes cultural performances on stage, ethnic cuisine, eclectic array arts & crafts, and hands on Asian inspired activities. It continued to be sponsored by the Asian American Coalition of Chicago in cooperation with the City of Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events. The festival has received impressive reviews. The program for the entire week continues to expand in scope and diversity.



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The 3rd Asian American Festival was hosted by the Filipino American Community, under the chairmanship of Dr. Evelyn D. Natividad, with Ms. Thelma Fuentes of the Philippine American Cultural Foundation, as co-chair. This year marked the participation of the Chicago Public Schools students. A special feature was the recognition of Asian American Veterans. The event's theme was "Asian American in America's Growth." As in the prior years, the event was also held at the Daley Plaza, and ran from May 21 – 25, 2001.

The 4th Asian American Festival was held on May 20 – 24, 2002, and was hosted by the Indian American Community with Mr. Prem Lalvani as chair, and Mr. Rajinder Mago as co-chair.

The 5th Asian American Festival was hosted by the Thai Association of Illinois, and took place on May 19 – 23, 2003. It was chaired by Ms. Nanta Buranakanchana and co-chaired by Prem Lalvani, Chiwin Nilapant, and Poxie Xumsai.

The 6th Asian American Festival was hosted by the Vietnamese Community and Nghia Sinh International on May 17 – 21, 2004, under the chairmanship of Dr. Nguyen Trung Hieu. The theme was "Asian Americans 2005: Preparing for Future Leaders."

The 7th Asian American Festival was hosted by the Indonesian American Community and chaired by Ms. Roosy Miller. The theme was "Unity in Diversity".

The 8th Asian American Festival was hosted by the Chinese American Community, with Ms. Esther Wong as chair. It was held on May 22 – 26, 2006, also at the Daley Plaza. Its theme was "Celebrating Asians in America".

The 9th Asian American Festival was hosted by the Pakistani American Community, with Ms. Sharmeen Younus as chair. It was held on May 21 – 25, 2007, with the "Dawn of a New Asia" as theme.

The 10th Asian American Festival was held on May 19 – 23, 2008, hosted by the Korean American Community, with Ms. Kay Rho as chair. The host community chose the theme "Cultural Threads Woven into the Fabric of a United Future".

This year, the Filipino American Community is very proud to host the 11th Asian American Festival at the Daley Plaza, on May 18 – 22, 2009. In celebration of the festival's 10th anniversary, Ms. Angeles "Jelly" Carandang, this year's chair, has encouraged members of the planning committee to help make this year's program very special. The Philippine American Cultural Foundation is the co-sponsor for the host community, and its president, Ms. Adeline Fajardo, is co-chairing this year's event.

Every year, we give recognition to all Asian American Community leaders and members of the Asian American Festival Planning Committee for their hard work, dedication and commitment in making this event a success. This year, we'll try to make it more memorable for everyone.

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