

# State of Illinois celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May 22 2017 9:02 AM





*"Gateway to Success" event recognizes the contributions of the Asian & Pacific Islander American community to Illinois*

CHICAGO - The Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR), in partnership with Illinois Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti, today celebrated Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month at an event honoring the contributions of Asian & Pacific Islander Americans to Illinois history.

"Today we celebrate the heritage, culture, and incredible accomplishments of our leaders in the Illinois Asian Pacific American community. We in Illinois are so blessed because we have one of the largest and most vibrant Asian Pacific American communities, anywhere in the United States of America" said Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti. "This celebration gives us the opportunity to highlight all the different generations of community leaders that have helped so many people and have created a better future for the people of Illinois."

The event, titled "Gateway to Success," featured Secretary Designate Hardik Bhatt of the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology as a keynote speaker and included cultural performances from pungmul youth ensemble SoriBeat and Chicago-based musical duo Two Filipinos.

"We are honored to host the Asian American Heritage Month Celebration at the James R. Thompson Center," said Secretary Designate Bhatt. "Governor Rauner places a high priority on developing a culture of diversity at the State of Illinois, which serves to strengthen how we serve and represent the residents of our state."

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti presented a proclamation from Governor Rauner formally recognizing May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Illinois and IDHR Acting Director Janice Glenn presented four awards to individual and organizations who have contributed to opportunities in their communities.

"We must never lose sight of the positive impact of both the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities on our state and recognize those who have helped open and further the gateways to success," said Acting Director Glenn. "Today's awardees exemplify leadership and deserve our heartfelt recognition."

The Legacy Award was presented to Chin Keomuongchanh, in honor of the qualities of leadership he has demonstrated in his three decades of U.S. military service and for his exemplary service to the Laotian American community in an effort to further the progress of the Asian Pacific American community at large.

The Emerging Leaders Award was given to SoriBeat, a youth Korean drumming group, for their substantive contribution to furthering the traditions of Korean cultural and performing arts through youth leadership development, along with their commitment to bringing communities together through education and mutual understanding.

The Service Award was presented to Vietnamese Association of Illinois for their focus on serving diverse communities, fostering unity, and promoting Vietnamese American identity service in assisting the Vietnamese American and the greater immigrant and refugee community of Illinois through cultural, social, and educational programs.

The Community Leadership Award given to Jeongling Liu, President of Asia Dynamics, Inc., for her outstanding leadership in business, philanthropy, and volunteerism, and for mobilizing the spirit of giving as part of her commitment to the advancement of the Asian Pacific American community.



