

Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian (APINH)

HONOR

Magazine

City of Albuquerque
Office of APINH Affairs

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**Building Belonging
in Albuquerque**

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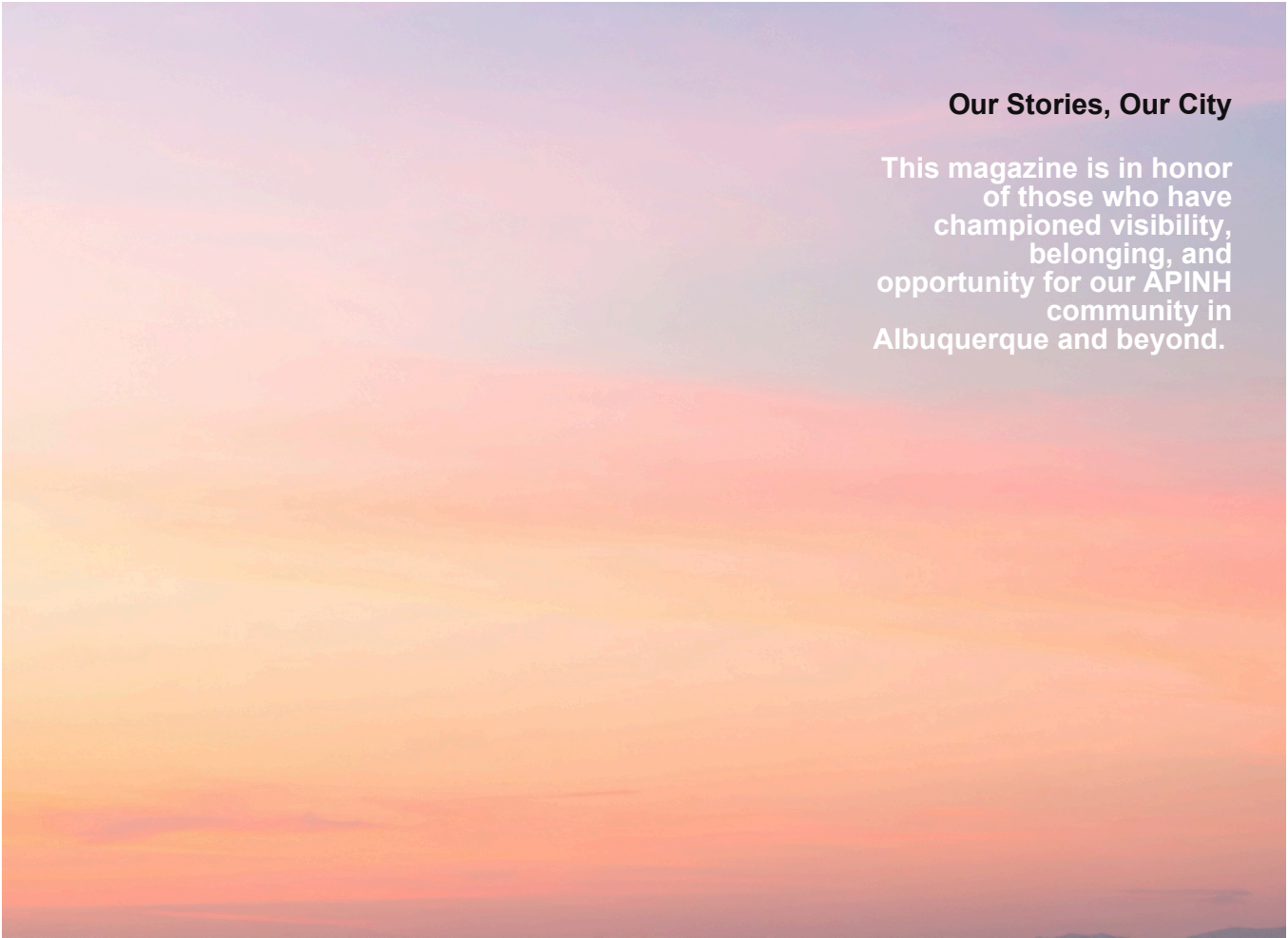
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Our Stories, Our City

This magazine is in honor
of those who have
championed visibility,
belonging, and
opportunity for our APINH
community in
Albuquerque and beyond.

02

Honoring Our APINH Center Steering Committee + Launching the Office of APINH Affairs

Albuquerque is entering a new chapter in building belonging for its Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian (APINH) community. For years, community members have advocated for representation, programming, and spaces that reflect their cultures and histories. The APINH Center Steering Committee has been at the forefront of this work, guiding a community-led visioning process to shape an APINH Community Center that will serve multigenerational programming across West Asian, Central Asian, South Asian, East Asian, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian communities--and our whole diaspora.

Thanks to this tireless advocacy, and the support of the City of Albuquerque and the Office of Equity & Inclusion, the first-ever APINH Liaison and the Office of APINH Affairs are now a reality--marking a historic milestone for our city.

How to get involved: [Join the APINH Center Visioning Project](#)

You can read more about members of our APINH Center Steering Committee in our Community Profiles section, and about our inaugural Liaison in our Editor's Letter.



Why Visibility Matters

From the Editor



Jacky So

FUSE Executive Fellow &
HONOR Magazine Executive Editor

Welcome to the inaugural issue of HONOR Magazine, a platform dedicated to building belonging in Albuquerque for our Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian (APINH) community!

APINH is Albuquerque's **fastest growing community**, representing **62-74 countries** and a high rate of business ownership, but we have historically been treated as a monolith. In planning to launch our Office of APINH Affairs, I did a deep dive into what our existing demographic data looks like—I reviewed 237 data files, 55 data sources, hundreds of docs, and chatted with over 550 people over 70 days. I learned that we are going to have to build the kind of disaggregated data we are searching for. My larger goal is to create new types of data with community that will help shape city resources and improve visibility for our large diaspora, and the way for us to rally together is through this magazine and our new website at cabq.gov/oei/apinh.

As a first-generation (born here) Cambodian-American woman in tech, there's so much I had to navigate without knowing anyone else culturally who could have mentored me, on top of always feeling invisible in every dataset or survey growing up. My personal mission is to do what I can to show up for my community in the way that's needed, and in our new era of AI and modernizing systems, I care deeply about making sure we know what is hidden in the data before systems get automated.

Conditions of well-being for our community are more nuanced—it's not as straightforward as tracking someone's ability to build savings, though financial well-being is one component.

For our community, well-being is tied to representation, visibility, cultural identity, and access.

Visibility matters because it's the foundation for power, equity, and opportunity. Without it, community voices go unheard, city data remains incomplete, and resources are misdirected.

Our vision is to create a digital third place that helps people move from online to in-real-life: a hub that amplifies APINH voices, shares stories, connects residents to local resources, circulates local dollars, and helps shape city data to reflect our community's real needs. We couldn't do this without you—so please, build and grow this magazine with us!

I'm so happy that the City of Albuquerque supports this new chapter for APINH belonging in Albuquerque. Together, our networks extend far and wide, and the local capacity building we're doing impacts beyond Albuquerque as well.

I'm endlessly grateful to have such an amazing Liaison represent us: **Carlo James Aragón**. His tireless advocacy, beautiful spirit, and passionate vision for our community as Albuquerque's first-ever **APINH Liaison** gives me tremendous hope for what we will all be able to achieve with all of our efforts combined. If you haven't met him yet, I can't wait for you to get to know Carlo!

Executive Editor-in-Chief



cabq.gov/apinh



Meet Carlo James Aragón: Our First-Ever APINH Liaison



Querencia: Returning Home

Welcome & Vision



Carlo James Aragón

City of Albuquerque

Inaugural Liaison for Asian, Pacific Islander & Native Hawaiian Affairs



A year ago, on September 27, 2024, I watched the soft light of the setting sun slide across a painting that hung in my apartment at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. I was still serving as a U.S. diplomat, leading my team through a time of profound regional instability. My eyes stayed fixed on the painting, a scene of New Mexico, my father and I tending to corn beneath a blazing sky, my mother stringing red chile ristras. The sunlight caught the brushstrokes just right, as if the sun itself remembered home: the silhouettes of mountains, the scent of earth after rain, the tenderness of family working the land. For a few still moments, I was back there, in the stillness of the Rio Grande Valley, in that sacred feeling of home.

Then came the sound. The sharp crack. The pause. And then the thunder of destruction. I watched as neighborhoods were consumed by bombs, by fire, by war.

By morning, we were ordered to evacuate. My family and I packed what little we could, leaving behind the painting of home on the wall. The armored convoy carried us through Beirut's scarred and burning streets to the airport, and from there, back across oceans — to New Mexico.

Querencia: Returning Home

Welcome & Vision



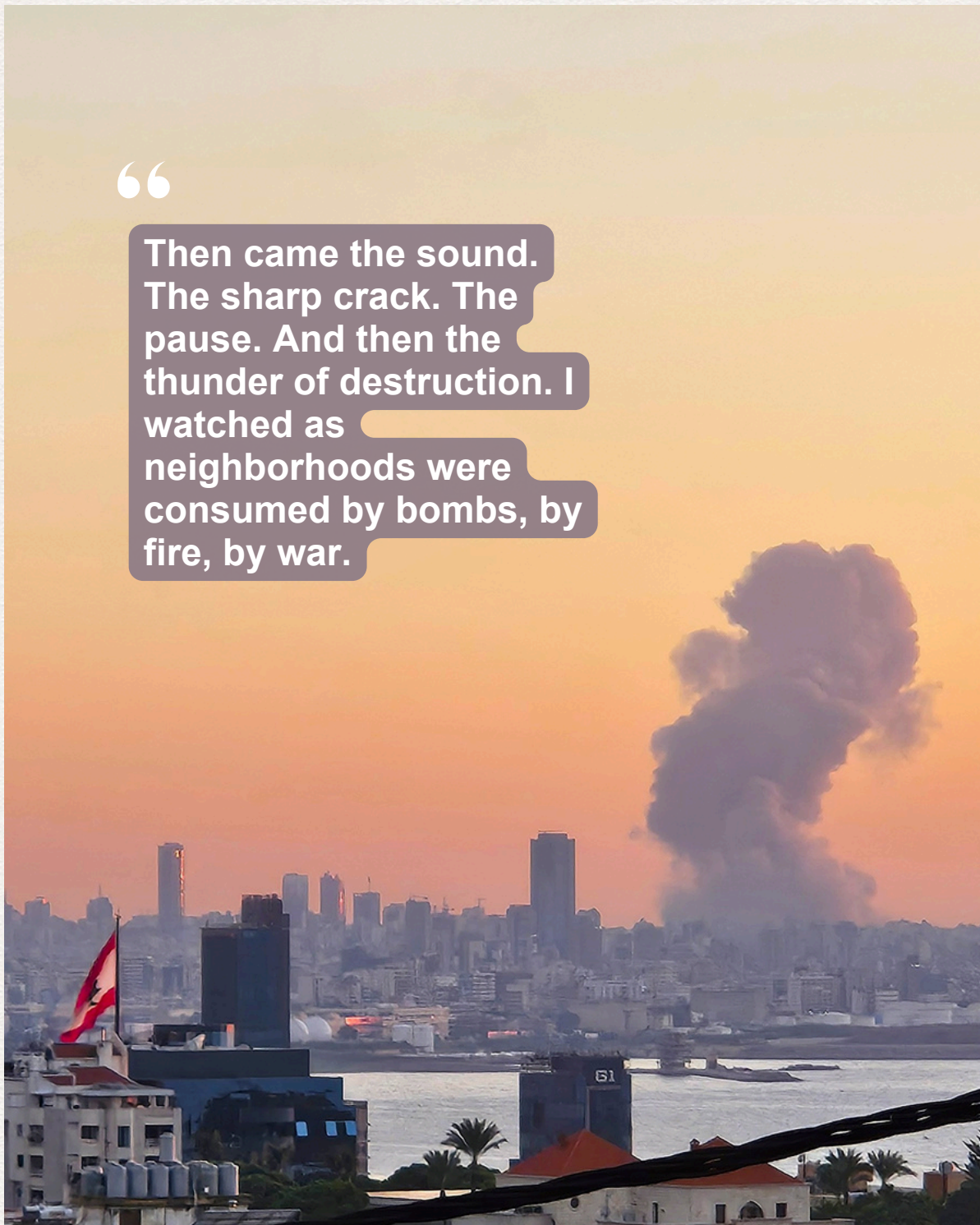
Carlo James Aragón

City of Albuquerque

Inaugural Liaison for Asian, Pacific Islander & Native Hawaiian Affairs

“

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Querencia: Returning Home

Welcome & Vision



Carlo James Aragón

City of Albuquerque

Inaugural Liaison for Asian, Pacific Islander & Native Hawaiian Affairs

Safely home, I believed the hardest part was behind us. It wasn't. Within eight weeks, my mother, Cindy Onday Aragón, daughter of the Philippines and matriarch of our family, fell ill and passed away from a rare autoimmune disease. Her loss hollowed me. My father, Celedón Aragón, had passed the year before.

Suddenly, the people who anchored my world were gone, and I was left holding the threads of their legacy, unsure where to begin again. In that grief, I realized the hardest decision of my life was choosing to be present for my family when they needed me most.



That choice changed everything. I stepped away from my diplomatic career to reclaim something deeper than a profession: belonging. In New Mexico, we call it querencia, a concept inherited from our Indigenous brothers and sisters. It is more than home. It is a way of being rooted in place, a strength that flows from family, from land, from community. Querencia steadied me when grief tried to unmoor me.

That same spirit of querencia led me to this work. When my mentor and friend, former State Representative Kay Bounkeua, reached out saying, "Carlo, I thought you'd be a great candidate for the APINH Liaison position. I'm not sure if it's the right time for you — just know I've been thinking of you," I hesitated. I was still grieving, still searching for alignment. But her message planted a seed, a way forward, a way to honor my parents and the communities that gave them belonging.

Querencia: Returning Home

Welcome & Vision



Carlo James Aragón

City of Albuquerque

Inaugural Liaison for Asian, Pacific Islander & Native Hawaiian Affairs

As the inaugural Liaison for Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian Affairs for the City of Albuquerque, my mission is to build visibility, power, and connection for our communities. Our office exists because our stories matter, because our contributions have too often been overlooked in the broader narrative of New Mexico.

We are reclaiming our place in this city's history, culture, and future.

Some APINH community members came to Albuquerque through displacement, through the wounds of war, or in search of opportunity. Yet what unites us is the same force that called me home, querencia. It is the quiet pride we carry for our ancestral homelands and the shared love we've found here, in this city that has held us. It is the way we build family wherever we plant our roots.

My hope is simple yet profound: that our office becomes a home for the APINH community, a place where we see ourselves reflected in policy, art, and opportunity. A place where our elders feel honored, our youth feel inspired, and our businesses and organizations feel supported to thrive.

But this vision will only come alive if we build it together.

I invite you, community members, entrepreneurs, families, and allies, to grow with us.

Join our events, share your stories, volunteer, and lend your wisdom.

Creating visibility for our community is a shared light that strengthens us all.

Together, we can root our querencia in Albuquerque's soil, transforming visibility into belonging, and belonging into power.

To our community, I offer this invitation: grow with us. Share your story, lend your wisdom, and help us build a querencia that includes us all.

Because home is not just a place we return to, it's something we create together.

Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian Liaison

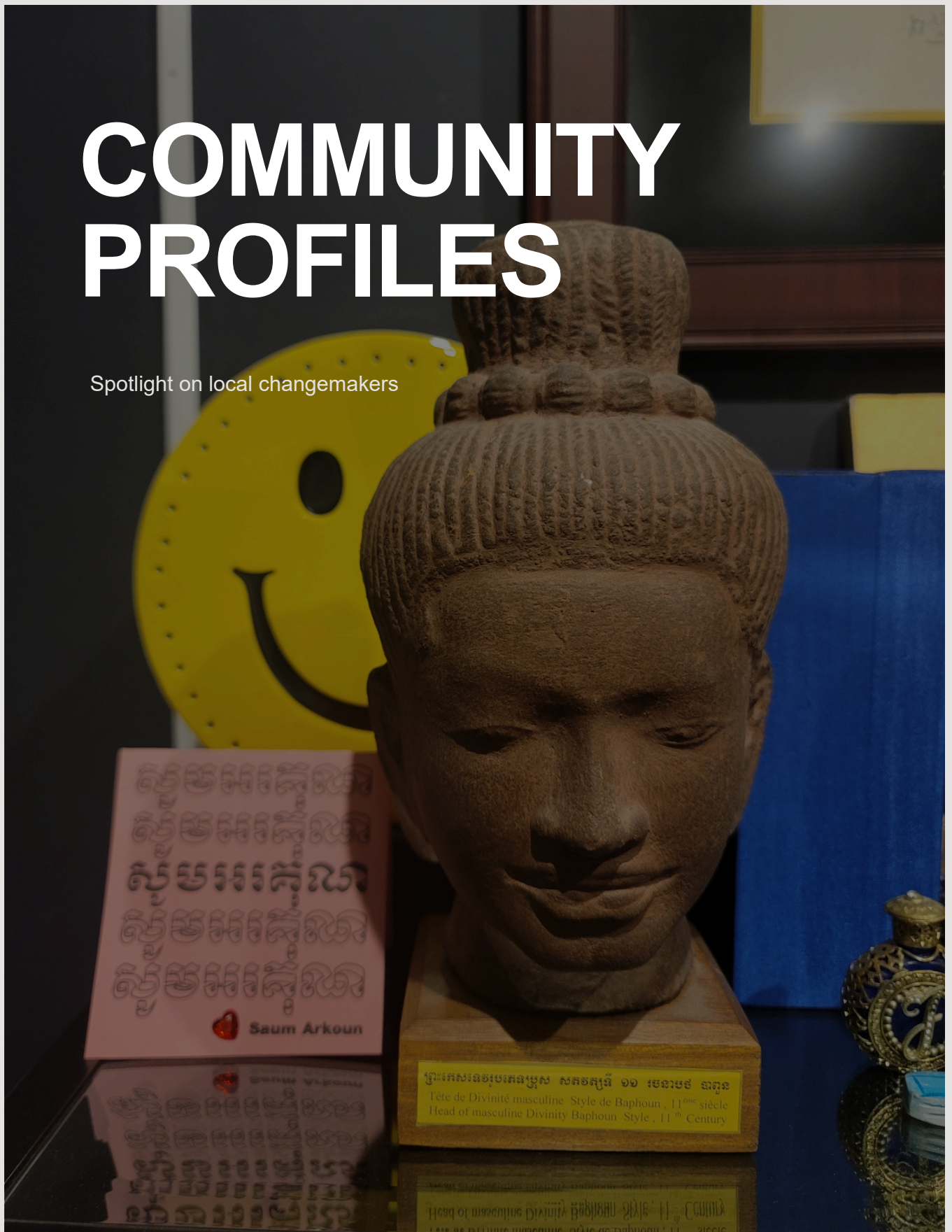


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COMMUNITY PROFILES

Spotlight on local changemakers



Building Belonging: From Global Lessons to Local Leadership

Community Profiles



Mayor Tim Keller

City of Albuquerque



When I was in my twenties, I spent almost three years living in Cambodia--an experience that completely changed the trajectory of my life. I helped run the country's first technology company, where we hired landmine victims and survivors of trafficking and taught them digital skills to earn a living wage by building websites. Coming from a totally different background in finance, it opened my eyes to the profound impact that opportunity--and government--can have on people's lives. What began as a professional detour became a personal transformation. I saw firsthand how access, compassion, and partnership can rebuild not just economies, but dignity.

That global perspective continues to shape how I serve Albuquerque today. The lessons I carried home from Cambodia are the same ones that guide our work here: progress happens when we meet people where they are, see the incredible value in cultural diversity, and build with communities rather than for them.

Albuquerque's strength has always been its diversity. Part of that strength is pushing past the 'tricultural myth' and see other vibrant cultures long established in the Duke City. Our Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian communities bring deep traditions of entrepreneurship, family, and service that enrich our city's story. From Filipino nurses and Vietnamese restaurant owners to Bhutanese students to Afghan artisans to Indians on our cricket pitch and Native Hawaiian artists, the APINH community continues to define what a thriving, inclusive Albuquerque looks like.



“ Today marks the start of a new chapter--this time for the APINH community-- with the hiring of our first-ever Mayor's APINH Community Liaison, the launch of the APINH FUSE Fellowship, and the opening of the APINH Office!

Our city's approach to inclusion is holistic--it reaches across every department and neighborhood. Through Affordable ABQ, we're connecting families to free and cost-saving services--from food access and childcare to transportation and home repairs--because inclusivity means making life more livable for everyone calling Albuquerque home.

We're also making city government more accessible and responsive. We've expanded language access, ensuring that residents can engage with city services in the languages they speak at home. The City ensures that language is never a barrier to safety or essential city services by committing every department to providing interpretation and translation support where it's needed.

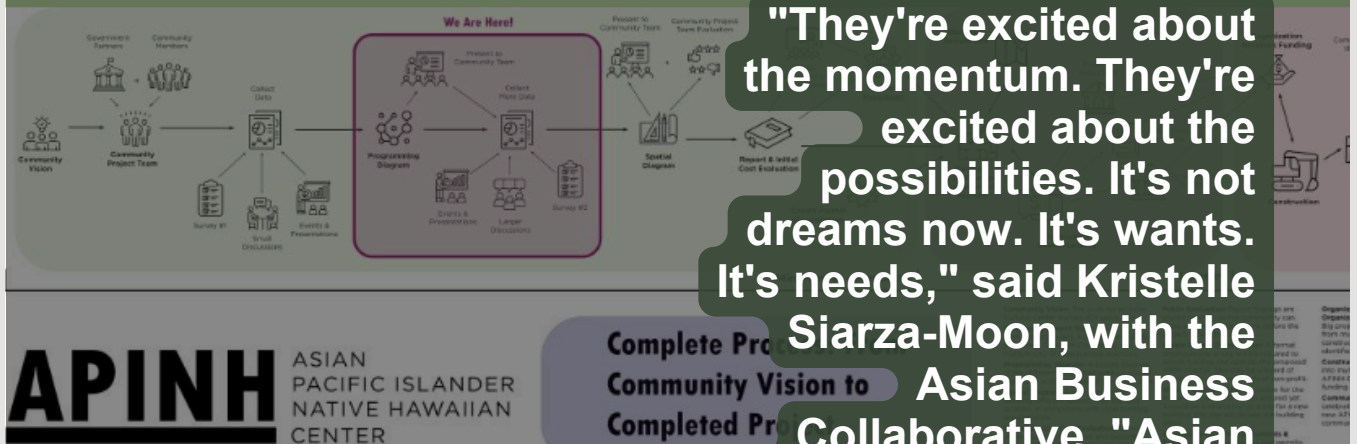
Through our Albuquerque Community Safety department, we've diverted over 115,000 calls from the police, ensuring the right response for every call, every time. This service supports over 240 languages, including Vietnamese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Korean, Hindi, and many others spoken by Albuquerque's APINH communities. Albuquerque's effort to be an inclusive, immigrant- and refugee-friendly city means everyone feels safe. It's a model rooted in empathy and respect--the same approach I saw work so powerfully in Cambodia.

This vision is deeply personal and specific. When I ran for this job, I promised to create the City's first Office of Equity and Inclusion--and we did. Each set of leaders in that office has left a powerful mark, from advancing refugee resettlement and strengthening Black community engagement to making Albuquerque the nation's first city to institutionalize Tribal Sovereignty and formal government-to-government relations with our Native communities. Today marks the start of a new chapter--this time for the APINH community-- with the hiring of our first-ever Mayor's APINH Community Liaison, the launch of the APINH FUSE Fellowship, and the opening of the APINH Office!

From the villages of Cambodia to the neighborhoods of Albuquerque, I've seen what happens when people are given the tools and trust to build their own future. That's what inclusion really means--recognizing the power in every community and giving it room to thrive. Together, we are building belonging--one partnership, one family, and one opportunity at a time. Today, I'm so grateful for everyone who made this possible, our Office of Equity and Inclusion and APINH team that has established this office, thank you!



OUR APINH CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE



The First Asian-American
Woman to Serve in NM
Legislature

Kay Bounkeua

Kay Bounkeua is a mom, wife, and daughter to strong and loving immigrants who journeyed from Laos into New Mexico.

She received her master of public health degree from the University of Michigan, was the first Asian American woman to serve as a New Mexico state legislator, and has over fifteen years of executive leadership in local and national nonprofits and boards.

She is a graduate of the Asian Pacific American Women's Leadership Institute, W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Community Leadership Network, and the Clinton's School of Public Service. She is a current board member at NM Center on Law and Poverty and ChangeLab Solutions.

To better support communities and leaders, Kay launched Ma Der Collaborations in 2024, an independent consulting business that provides services around organizational capacity building and development, policy and advocacy support, leadership building for emerging and current leaders, and program design and implementation for nonprofits, businesses, governments, and foundations grounded in deep relationship building and storytelling.



Kay Bounkeua

Q: Our theme is “Building Belonging in Albuquerque”. What does this mean to you, and what can people do to nurture this?

Bounkeua: I am beyond blessed to be the mom to an incredibly thoughtful six year old daughter, and I often think of belongingness in a way that she might be able to understand both intellectually and while feeling it in her soul, heart, mind and body. After school, I often ask her these questions: who did you play with at recess? How did you help your class today? What was your favorite thing you learned?

Through her answers, I’m able to get a sense of who her community is and how she is included and includes others, if she has the confidence and ability to offer her gifts to the larger group, and if there are opportunities that exist, resonate, and are accessible to who she is as a growing person.

Similarly, I reflect on whether everyone in Albuquerque has the ability to access opportunities, is included and deeply connected to communities, and is able to engage in and have the power to make change within spaces that both see and value their inherent humanity while being invested in and resourced to grow their full potential. It strikes me that these basic fundamentals are a critical part of what drives belongingness for children, adults, and whole communities.

Q: What do you hope to see for our community’s growth in the next few years?

Bounkeua: In 1984, the year I was born, leaders in the APINH community began to formulate the idea of building a community center that honors, supports, and regenerates the APINH community, specifically the children and future children who will become our leaders. While there has been incredible ground gained for our communities - and proudly by our communities, we have yet to see the manifestation of this space. This is a legacy we cannot pass on to the next generation - my daughter cannot be advocating for this same goal when she’s 40.

I hope that we are able to see the completion of an APINH center for the entire state of New Mexico where we - the collective ‘we’ inclusive of and beyond APINH people - are seen, valued, and acknowledged and where we can further dismantle the myth of a tricultural state.

Q: Who were your mentors, and how do you honor those who came before us? Do you have any advice for people looking to find their own mentors?

Bounkeua: My mentors are and have always been my parents, immigrant leaders, emerging leaders, social change drivers, and the natural world that holds us - all of whom consistently show up, lead with love, boldness and through joy, and who are deeply rooted in their values. I hope I honor my ancestors by remembering their names, their journeys, and furthering the legacies they have built - whether through policy and systemic changes, through care and softness in nurturing relationships with all beings including the natural world, or seeing out their vision of belongingness and healing for all.

The First Asian-American Woman to Serve in NM Legislature

Kay Bounkeua

Q: Can you talk a bit about your heritage and why APINH visibility is important to you?

Bounkeua: I grew up in a mixed-status family, with cultural, historical, and geographic ties to Laos, China, and Thailand. I experienced how deeply policy decisions impacted my family's ability to access education, employment, and healthcare and how often APINH communities were made smaller or altogether forgotten when it came to civic participation.

Our ability to speak our home languages, surround ourselves with our communities, and share our gifts within community processes were often met with fear, retaliation, and stigma. Unfortunately, these same conditions across the nation are continuing, reemerging and being amplified for Black, Indigenous and communities of color.

If our communities continue to be othered for the sake of a few being able to hold power, we will never see a world where all of our children can thrive to their full potential.

Visibility for all, including APINH communities, is necessary in order to see, recognize, and honor the humanity within everyone.

Q: As the first Asian-American woman to service in the New Mexico Legislature, what did that moment mean for you personally and for our community?

Bounkeua: For me personally, it was a moment where someone like me - who grew up feeling like such an outsider in this state because of how I looked, the languages I spoke, and having grown up economically poor - could bring these lived experiences into a position that could make a powerful impact for communities across the state. It was a moment in history where I hoped my daughter and all children could see themselves reflected, and know that they could break through any barriers put in their path.

For our community, the moment had nothing to do with me and was a reflection of how far our state still has to go in being representative of the people that reside here. It was also a moment of remembering - remembering that so many people paved the way to make room for someone with my background to be in leadership, and that so many APINH leaders have served and are currently serving in different leadership capacities across the local, state, and national levels.

Ultimately, I chose not to run again for my seat so that I could be present for my daughter, who was two when I was first appointed - and was a decision that I knew deeply aligned to who I am as a person.

Q: What advice would you give to the next generation of Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian leaders interested in public service or politics?

Bounkeua: Know who you are and what you stand for so you can ask yourself every night if what you accomplished that day is something you can be proud of and something that honors the ancestors who guide you. If you've lost your way, if you no longer are able to find joy, lead with love, and care for yourself and those you have responsibility towards through your work, surround yourself with those who can guide you back on your path of remembering your life's purpose.

How to Support Kay Bounkeua's Work

Contact at madercollaborations.com

Community Profiles

02

HONOR Magazine



Lan Sena

Albuquerque's First Asian-American City
Councilor & the Policy Director for Center
for Civic Policy



What can't Lan Sena do?

She was Albuquerque's **First Asian-American City Councilor** and is currently the Policy Director for Center for Civic Policy--in addition to serving on our APINH Center Steering Committee.

A fierce advocate for positive change, Lan Sena was appointed to Albuquerque City Council in March 2020 and served until the end of 2021.

Thanks to her policy advocacy, we have the citywide resources that benefit everyone in Albuquerque: zero fares for transit, language access, and paid sick leave.

We're excited to feature Lan in a future spotlight where you can learn more about her path and any advice she has for how we can help APINH visibility in civic engagement.



Lan Sena being sworn in as District 1 Councilor in 2020



Some fast facts

- Born and raised in Albuquerque.
- Daughter of Vietnamese refugees that settled in Albuquerque in 1975 and 1981.
- UNM Lobos through and through: Baccalaureate degree in Political Science and Master of Health Administration from the School of Public Administration at UNM.
- Lan Sena was diagnosed with Stage 4, Hodgkins lymphoma in 2011 and is currently undergoing treatment for her second relapse.
- Since her diagnosis in 2011, she has advocated for policy changes to help fellow cancer patients and their families.
- Advocated for pre-existing conditions protections at the New Mexico state legislature and Medicaid Buy-In.
- Founders Council member with United States of Care, a bipartisan group advocating for Healthcare policy changes to protect families.



New Mexico Asian Family
Center Executive Director

Sachi Watase

Sachi Watase is from Albuquerque, NM and has a background in community organizing, teaching, and serving survivors of sexual assault. Watase is a Fulbright Scholar, an alum of the NM Women of Color Leadership Initiative, and a 2025 Albuquerque Business First 40 Under 40 Honoree.

She currently serves as the Executive Director of the NM Asian Family Center, a community-based organization offering culturally and linguistically tailored programs and services to Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian families in NM. As members of the groups they serve, Watase and her team understand, on a deeply personal level, the need for equitable access to critical social services, multigenerational programming, and platforms to uplift and empower community voices.

Outside of work, she likes to bake cakes, roller skate, play board games, and collect tiny things!



02



Sachi Watase

Q: Our theme is “Building Belonging in Albuquerque”. What does this mean to you, and what can people do to nurture this?

Watase: From a young age, I learned that New Mexico was made up of three cultures: Indigenous, Latino, and white. I repeated that story of New Mexico to others, not realizing that I had internalized an image of New Mexico that excluded me. I often saw my heritage reflected only as something to consume or exoticize, a result of this “tricultural” myth, which deeply shaped my own sense of belonging. After seeking belonging all over the world, an opportunity at the New Mexico Asian Family Center brought me back home after ten years away. I grappled with the decision to return but soon realized the meaning of working in the community that raised me, for an AAPINH organization offering the kind of programs I wish had existed when I was growing up. I’m now committed to challenging the myth that defines who “belongs” in New Mexico. For me, belonging means we stop asking people to prove they belong and instead recognize that they already do.

Q: What do you hope to see for our community’s growth in the next few years?

Watase: I hope to see a broader understanding of who makes up New Mexico and deeper investment in the communities that have long been overlooked. Our AAPINH population continues to grow, but recognition and resources haven’t kept pace. I want to see our stories woven more visibly into the narrative of this state, not just during heritage months, but in policy, education, and everyday life. At the same time, I hope our growth is rooted in humility and responsibility. As settlers, immigrants, and guests on the unceded land of the Tiwa, Tewa, and Diné peoples here in Albuquerque, we must remember that our belonging here is intertwined with their ongoing stewardship, resistance, and survival. Real growth means strengthening relationships across communities, deepening language access and mutual care, and reshaping systems so that everyone can thrive.

Q: Can you talk a bit about your heritage and why APINH visibility is important to you?

Watase: I am Japanese American and grew up in Albuquerque. Visibility to me means being trusted in our wisdom, not only recognized for our culture.

Q: How do cultural values or traditions shape the way your organization approaches support and empowerment?

Watase: Rather than forcing ourselves into prescribed “best practices,” we let our communities define what care and success look like for them. Those cultural values guide us to move at the pace of trust and to build systems that feel familiar to the people we serve.

Sachi Watase

Q: Who were your mentors, and how do you honor those who came before us? Do you have any advice for people looking to find their own mentors?

Watase: I've been shaped by many people who believed in me. One of them is Kei Tsuzuki, who encouraged me to return to Albuquerque and trust that I had something to offer my community. Her belief opened the path that led me to the New Mexico Asian Family Center. I also carry deep gratitude for Dr. Dely Alcantara, our founder, and for the generations of community builders, organizers, and visionaries who created the foundation I now get to walk on. Even though I never met some of them, I feel their impact and mentorship all the time—the ones here with us today, the ones who could not make it, the ones who have departed, the ones whose work was never seen or acknowledged, the ones who have challenged us and pushed us to be better, and the ones yet to come. My own path into leadership hasn't been linear, and I've learned that mentorship doesn't always come in expected ways. Sometimes it's someone who quietly models care, or challenges the way you see the world, or trusts you with responsibility before you think you are ready. I think we find our mentors by staying open to those moments of generosity and learning to recognize them as guidance.

Q: The NM Asian Family Center has been a safe and healing space for many. What have you learned about community care through your leadership?

Watase: My work with NMAFC has taught me that community care begins with caring for the people doing the work. If we want to sustain healing work, we have to create conditions where those caregivers feel supported, trusted, and seen. I've learned of many ways that community care can be realized: through sharing food, integrating every generation, making each other laugh even when times are tough, or holding silence for someone's grief.

How to Support Sachi Watase's Work

Donate to New Mexico Asian
Family Center at nmafc.org

Follow on social media



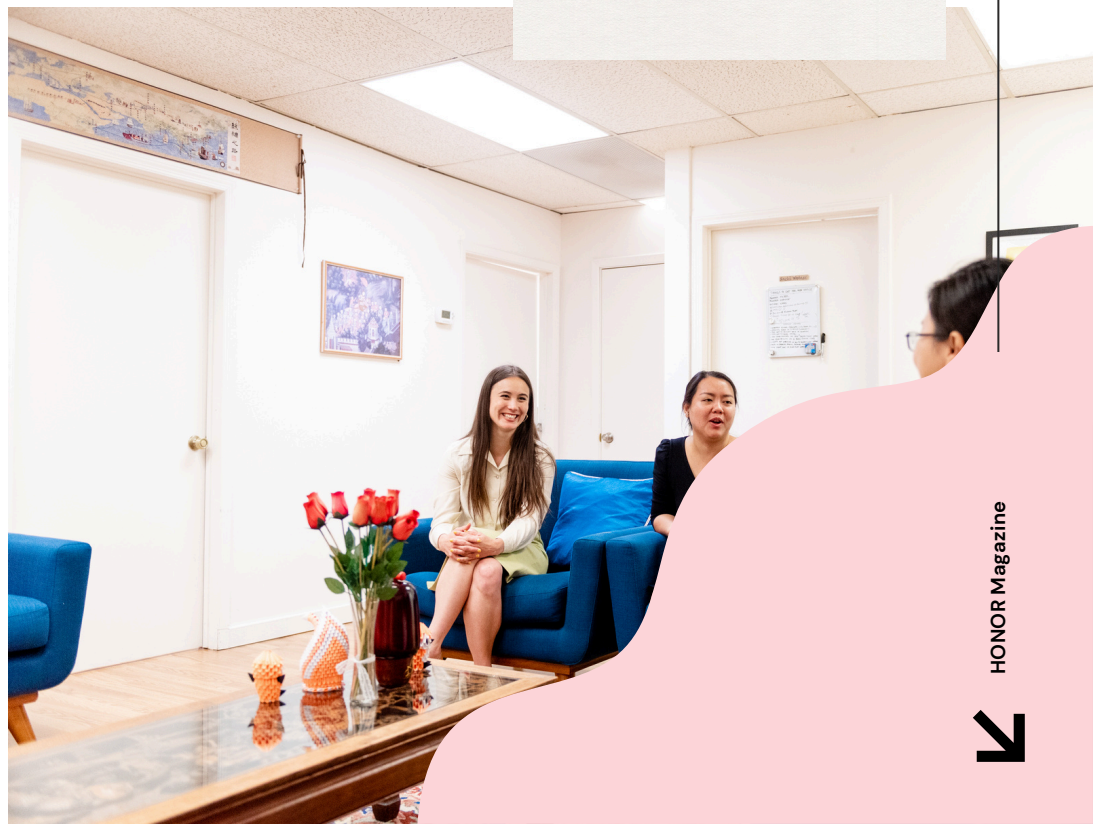
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Kristelle Siarza Moon

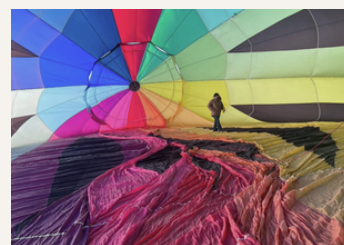
Asian Business Collaborative Executive
Director & CEO of Siarza



A powerhouse in one person--Kristelle Siarza Moon will be featured in our upcoming issues in-depth. She is the **Executive Director of Asian Business Collaborative and CEO of Siarza**--a digital, public relations & advertising agency.

In our upcoming issues, we'll be featuring an APINH gift guide to help circulate local dollars in Albuquerque, and we'll be sitting down with Kristelle Siarza Moon to talk about the strength of our local business community and economic contributions.

Consider this a preview of why we are in awe of her! Subscribe to our magazine to be notified when that issue drops.



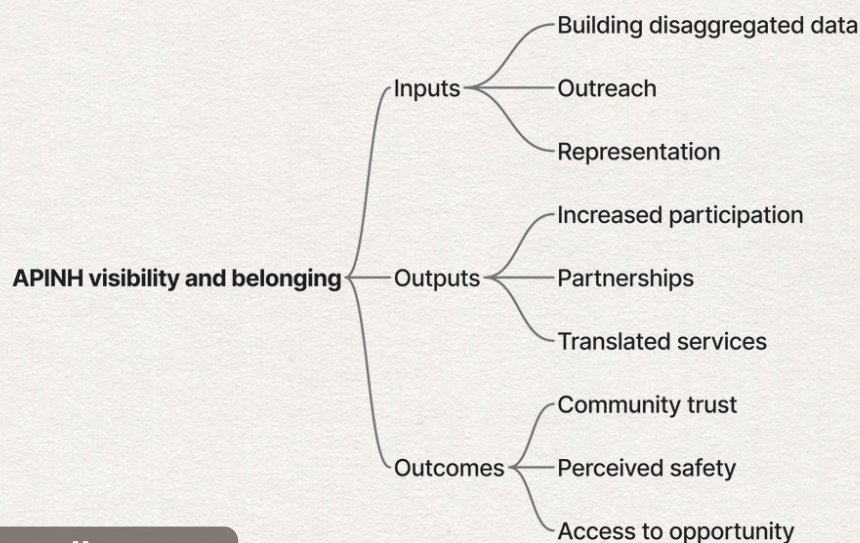
Kristelle Siarza Moon and her newly acquired balloon, "Hot Mess"

Some fast facts

- Founder of Asian Business Collaborative (ABC), which was named 2022 Non-Profit of the Year by Albuquerque Business First.
- PRNews 2025 named Kristelle a Top Woman in PR.
- Albuquerque Business First 2016 "40-Under-40" and 2019 "Women of Influence"
- Proud Filipina and 49ers fan.
- Balloon enthusiast: Student hot air balloon pilot and owner of "Hot Mess", her newly acquired balloon that debuted at the 2025 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.
- Under her leadership, ABC released an Economic Report which showed how **APINH residents make up 2% of state population but contribute \$2.8 Billion** in total economic impact.
- Siarza has a podcast! [Give it a listen.](#)



APINH Data Visibility = Capacity Building

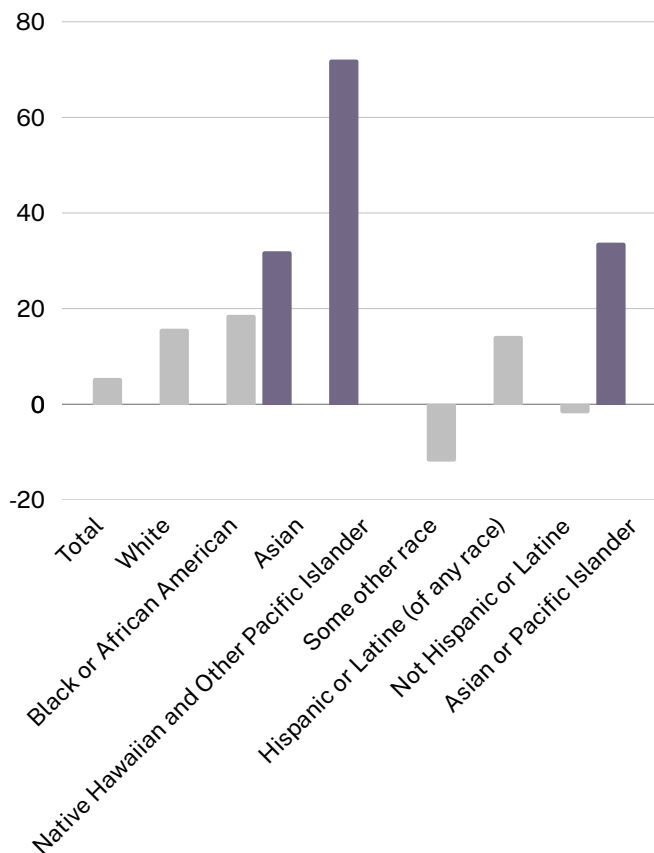


“We are a large diaspora, representing 62-74 countries, but our data has historically been shown in aggregate. This accidentally hides disparities because our data is skewed. It’s important for our community to build the kind of data we wish we had, and we’ll have to do it together.”

– FUSE Executive Fellow Jacky So

Growing APINH Data

City of Albuquerque Percent Change in Population from 2010 to 2020, by Race alone or in combination with one or more races



Source: Census Data

Data & Visibility

Visibility matters because it's the foundation for power, equity, and opportunity. APINH data is historically treated in aggregate, and our goal is to build the kind of granular data we need with community in order to capacity build together.

You matter--tell us if we are on the right track and be seen in our data.



cabq.gov/progressian
dhrust

We are a powerful engine for New Mexico's economy.

APINH residents make up 2% of state population but contribute more than

\$2.3 BILLION

in total revenue

and \$2.8 Billion in total economic impact.

See the 2025 Economic Report by Asian Business Collaborative (ABC), spearheaded by ABC Executive Director Kristelle Siarza Moon.

Almost 1 in 10

APINH residents live near Superfund Sites, including Carlisle Cleaners. Why is this important? See our article, "Explained Simply: Superfund Sites & Health."

This estimate may be higher since the CEJST data does not account for anyone who identifies with "Other" demographic or did not meet the population threshold to be counted by the Census.



F. No persons of African or Oriental descent shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant.

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Credit: Courtesy of Jacky So

02

Did You Know: Untold Histories of APINH in New Mexico

History leaves traces in unexpected places. One of ours is a property deed in New Mexico that once declared:

"No persons of African or Oriental descent shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant."

Though our community may be reassured that such covenants are no longer enforceable, their legacy lingers.

These targeted restrictions of anti-Black and anti-Asian zoning laws--alongside a historical landscape of forced displacement of Japanese Americans to internment camps in New Mexico--remind us that spaces were not built for us.

This history is not all that distant. It shapes our present. Recognizing and acknowledging these truths **honors** the resilience of those who endured them, and it challenges us to build a more inclusive future together.

Leaders like **Lan Sena**, our first Asian-American Albuquerque City Councilor (2020-2021) and member of our APINH Center Steering Committee, have championed visibility to these painful yet necessary conversations.

At HONOR Magazine and our digital hub, we are reclaiming that space--creating a digital third place--built for us, by us. Our aspirations are to work together and bring a physical third place--the APINH Center--to fruition.

We celebrate stories, preserve histories, strengthen civic engagement, and build the missing data. Together, we can advocate for reinvestment in shared spaces for collaborative and thriving neighborhoods.

We'd love to hear your thoughts. Share your reflections and hopes for our communities.



cabq.gov/buildwithus



"One of the largest concentration camps was built in Santa Fe...DOJ camps held around 7,000 people...[whose] cultural connection to Japan, as well as their high levels of education and respected social standing, had earned them the government's pre-emptive suspicion."

– [Aaron Cantú](#)
[When Santa Fe had a Japanese Prison Camp.](#)
[Santa Fe Reporter](#)



Credit: The National Archives, Public Domain

Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee: Voting Rights for Women, Economist, & Community Center Advocate

Does the name Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee sound familiar?

She was a pioneering Chinese American suffragist who fought for the right to vote for all women, even if the Chinese Exclusion Act barred her from citizenship and voting. In 1912, she was just a teenager when she organized a delegation in the massive suffrage march down New York City that drew crowds of 10,000 people--leading the parade on horseback.

Lee was known as a thought leader and, in the Suffrage Workshop in 1915, gave an influential speech that was covered in the New York Times. The speech, titled "China's Submerged Half", advocated education, civic engagement, and women's equality.

She was also the first Chinese woman in the US to earn a doctorate in economics, and her thesis was the first agricultural economics text authored by a foreign Chinese student and bridged Western economic theory with traditional Chinese economic thought within the realm of modern agricultural reform.

Lee's impact went beyond activism and scholarship. In 1926, she purchased a building in NYC Chinatown that served as a community center for her ministry, providing education, health services, and social support for generations of immigrants. This lasting space--First Chinese Baptist Church, still standing today--reflects her vision of visibility, opportunity, and empowerment--reminding us why her story matters today.

In the same spirit, our inaugural APINH Liaison is working toward coordinating an APINH Community Center right here in Albuquerque. You can help make this vision a reality--support the APINH Center Fund, managed independently by the Albuquerque Community Foundation:

[Donate to the APINH Center Fund >>](#)



Newspaper clippings:
The National Archives,
Public Domain

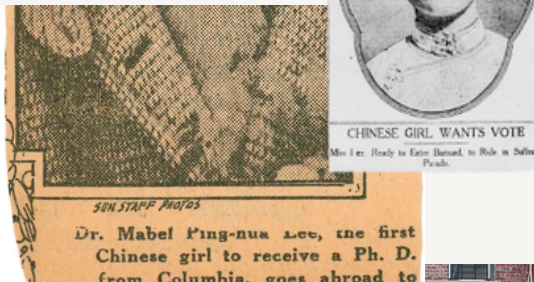


Photo: National
Trust for Historic
Preservation





Credit: Jared Chamey, *A human-centered approach to data visualization*, MIT News

Designing for Agency: Data Where Everyone Belongs

“That has been really important for us, to make sure as people who are not blind, that we are developing tools and platforms that are actually useful for blind and low-vision people.”

— Professor Arvind Satyanarayan

At MIT, Professor Arvind Satyanarayan’s Visualization Group is redefining who gets to see (and shape) the data. From tools that give blind and low-vision users agency to exploring how charts can reinforce or challenge bias, his work reminds us that inclusion in data isn’t automatic and must be designed.

At MIT, Professor Arvind Satyanarayan is reimagining what it means to see *and* be seen through data. His work bridges technology and humanity, challenging how information is presented, interpreted, and shared. Data, he argues, is not neutral. Its visual form shapes who participates in knowledge and who is left out.

Through projects that integrate accessibility into the heart of design, Satyanarayan’s team is creating new pathways for inclusion.

- Their tools enable blind and low-vision users to explore charts through touch and sound, transforming static graphs into living, multisensory experiences.
- The lab also studies how color, layout, and framing influence perception—revealing how data can both illuminate and obscure truth.

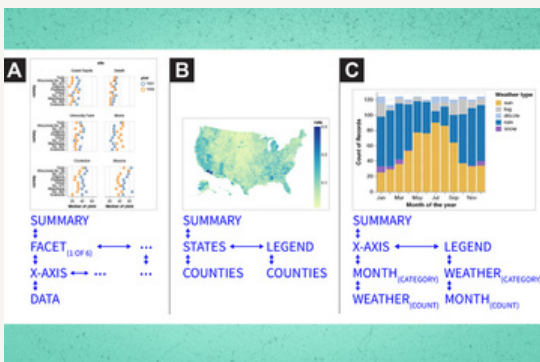
Satyanarayan’s vision is deeply democratic: that everyone, regardless of ability or background, should have the agency to question, analyze, and contribute to the data shaping our world.

By centering human experience in digital design, he and his students remind us that visibility is about access and belonging. In a world increasingly defined by numbers, their work restores the power of empathy, reminding us that behind every dataset is a story worth seeing.

Share with us if you have a story about feeling invisible in the data or would like to contribute to building new types of APINH data for our community.

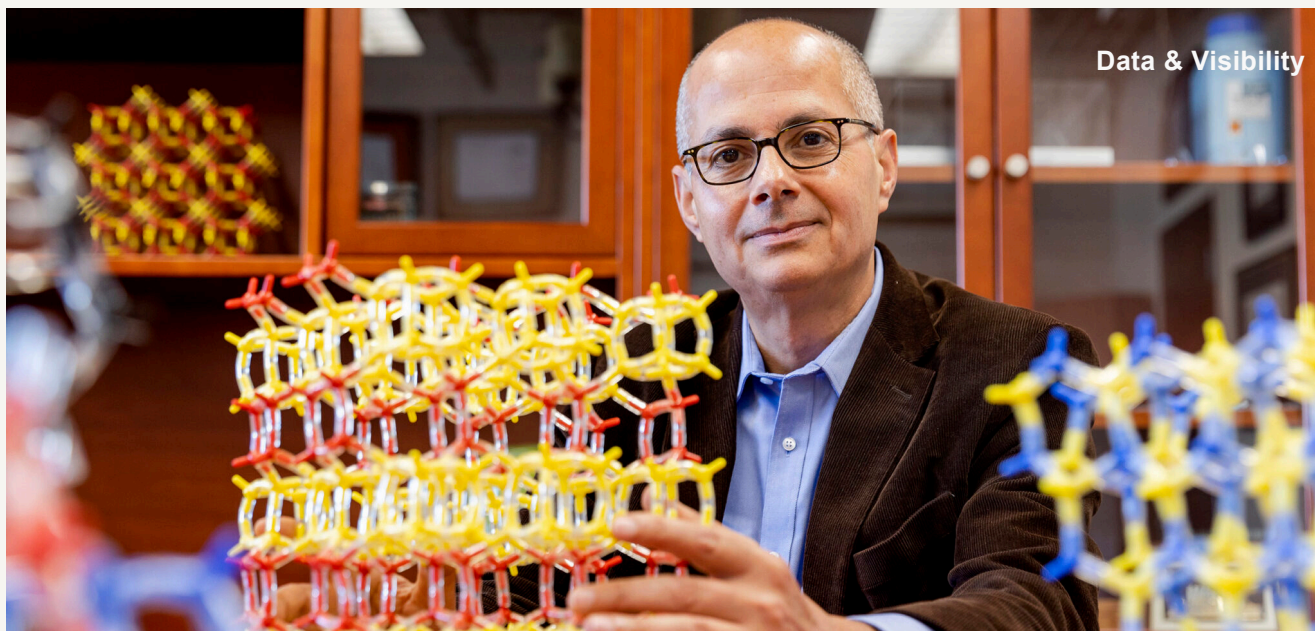


cebg.gov/buildwithus



Credit: Courtesy of MIT News and the researchers





Credit: Brittany Hosea-Small for UC Berkeley

02

Nobel Chemistry & the Promise of Clean Air

The 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry honors UC Berkeley's Omar Yaghi and collaborators in Japan and Australia for creating metal-organic frameworks—molecular lattices that capture carbon, store clean energy, and harvest water from desert air, advancing both environmental justice and global scientific collaboration.

In a year defined by global climate challenges, the 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry celebrates innovation that makes the invisible visible. UC Berkeley's Dr. Omar Yaghi, along with Richard Robson of the University of Melbourne and Susumu Kitagawa of Kyoto University, was honored for creating metal-organic frameworks—microscopic molecular lattices that can trap, store, and release gases like carbon dioxide and water vapor.

These “molecular sponges” hold promise for environmental justice, offering tools to capture carbon emissions, harvest clean water from desert air, and store renewable fuels. Yaghi, a Jordanian-American scientist born to a Palestinian refugee family, pioneered this work he calls reticular chemistry—the science of stitching molecules into vast, stable structures. His inventions have inspired global collaborations spanning Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas, turning chemistry into an act of planetary care.

Through his Berkeley Global Science Institute, Yaghi also advances access to scientific training across borders—from Vietnam to Jordan—ensuring that discovery and data visibility extend beyond elite labs.

His Nobel Prize underscores the power of chemistry and connection: between molecules, nations, and our shared climate future.

[UC Berkeley's Omar Yaghi shares 2025 Nobel Prize in chemistry | University of California](#)

Let us know if you're interested in climate tech, green workforce opportunities, and sustainability stories.



cabq.gov/buildwithus



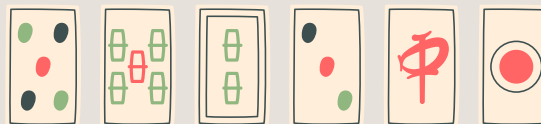
Third Places: UNM AAPI Resource Center (AAPIRC)

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm
Mesa Vista Hall 1064 - 1st Floor
MSC06 3785
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131

“Securing dedicated space is a critical milestone in AAPIRC’s ongoing development and growth and is also a tremendous demonstration of the positive power and impact of the student voice,” said Pamela Agoyo, acting director of Asian American Pacific Islander Resource Center.”



Credit: University of New Mexico News Room and Asian American Pacific Islander Resource Center (AAPIRC)



In September 2025, over 350 people gathered to celebrate UNM’s Asian American Pacific Islander Resource Center (AAPIRC) opening its own dedicated space. The center is open to all students and has a variety of programming that promotes holistic well-being and support.

Supporting a physical space where APINH students can feel psychologically safe, understood, and freed from the pressures of the “Model Minority Myth” (SC Pacific Asia Museum) is one way to build belonging in Albuquerque.

“The center supported me academically and culturally while I pursued my MFA.”
– Gabriel Hudson, UNM alumnus

Ways to support UNM AAPIRC

There are dedicated rooms for prayer/meditation, playing/learning mahjong, and plenty of space for center visitors to connect with each other over eating, socializing, relaxing, and studying.



Donate to the UNM fund

Follow on social media

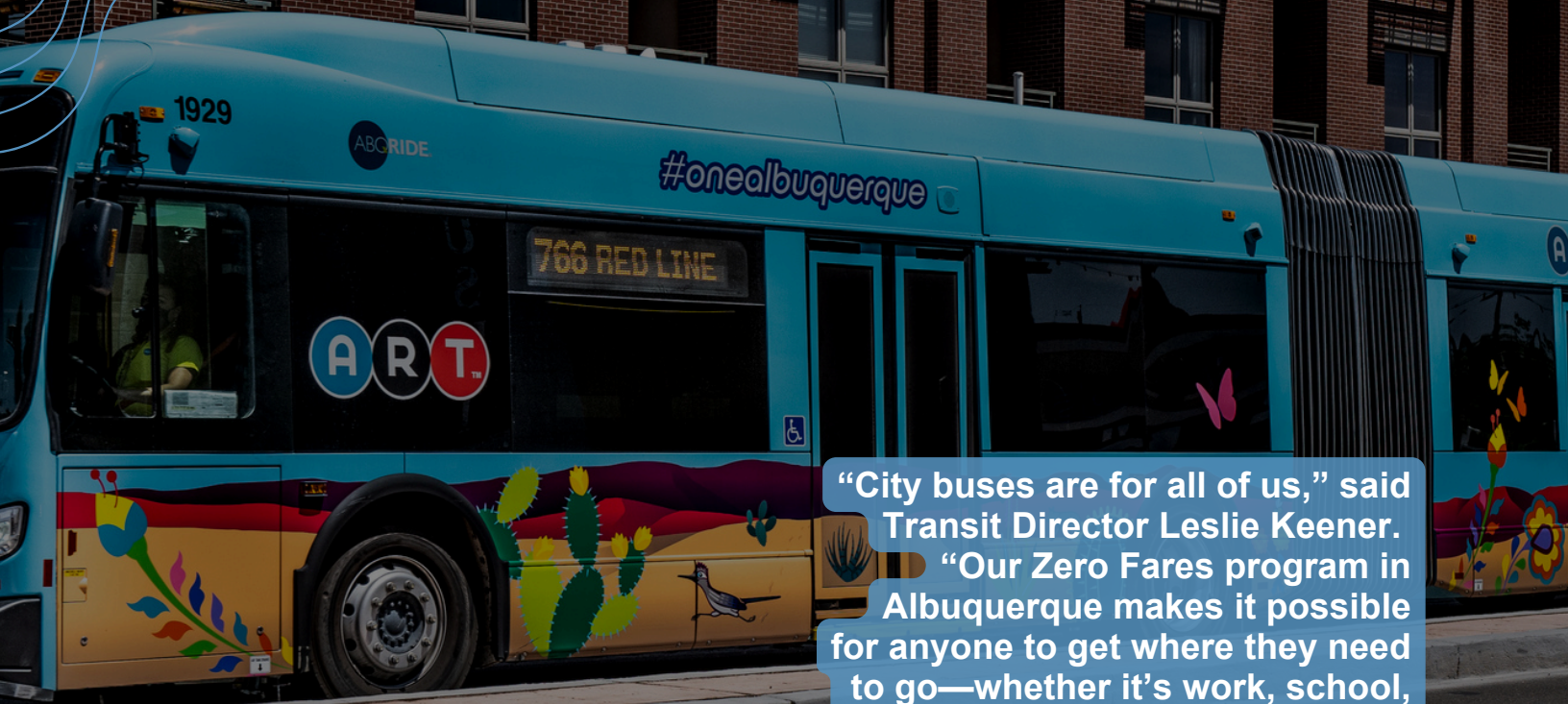


AAPIRC Contact Info

Phone: (505) 277-2021
Email: aapirc@unm.edu

TRANSIT & ACCESS

Zero-Fare, Infinite Possibilities



“City buses are for all of us,” said Transit Director Leslie Keener. “Our Zero Fares program in Albuquerque makes it possible for anyone to get where they need to go—whether it’s work, school, local businesses, or anywhere in between. By removing barriers to transit, we’re connecting people, strengthening our community, and putting money back into Albuquerque residents’ pockets.”

How To Get There: Talin Market World Food Fare & Phamily Tea House

Talin Market World Food Fare

[88 Louisiana Blvd, Albuquerque, NM 87108](#)

7 days a week, 9 am - 6 pm



Credit: Outside image, [_route505travels](#).
Snacks, Jacky So.

New Mexico's largest international food grocer. Whether you're looking for Pandan or Ube paste, Sambal, Chili Garlic Sauce, Sriracha, Coco Rico, Shrimp Chips, Fish Sauce, or anything else--they have over 100,000 different food products.



Central Ave. & Louisiana Blvd SE

66

Central @ Louisiana

157

Louisiana @ Conchiti

766

ART - International District Station

777

ART - International District Station

Phamily Tea House

[2132 Central Ave SE Ste B, Albuquerque, NM 87106](#)

Monday - Saturday, 11 am - 8 pm



Credit: Outside image, Jacky So.
Drinks, [@phamily_tea_house](#)

Phamily Tea House is our featured local business for our inaugural issue! We can't wait for you to get to know Jerry, the manager of this community-oriented family business.

Jerry represents our future--he's the next generation taking over the family business. What's so unique about Phamily Tea House is that his parents noticed his passion (he was in culinary school!) and opened Phamily Tea House to support his dreams.

Jerry also encouraged us to meet the new APINH business next door, Amalie Coffee Co., which just opened and makes the shopping center across from UNM ~50% APINH owned!



Across from UNM on Yale & Central Ave.

50

Yale @ Central

TASTE & PLACE

Stories Behind Local APINH Businesses

“When we’re talking about a growing digital world and how people are craving to find their physical third places again--a place between work and home where community gathers and thrives together--having a network of APINH businesses is like having a cousin’s house you can go to at any time.

Their stories are our stories.
Our strength is in supporting and growing together.”

– FUSE Executive Fellow Jacky So



The image shows a menu for 'Phamily Tea House' posted on a glass door. The menu is divided into several sections: Black Tea, Fruit Tea, Milk Tea, Milk Alternatives, Beverages, Refreshers, and Food Coffee. Each section lists various drinks and food items with their prices. A red circular sticker with the text 'Phamily Tea House' is also visible on the door.

Phamily Tea House		Phamily Tea House	
Black Tea	Fruit Tea	Milk Tea	Milk Alternatives
Appetizers	Beverages	Refreshers	Food Coffee

Phamily Tea House: Boba Made With Love & More



2132 Central Ave SE Ste B
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Monday - Saturday, 11 am - 8 pm

Across from UNM on
Yale & Central Ave.



Yale @ Central

50



Credit: Jacky So

We are so happy to feature the story behind **Phamily Tea House**, a local favorite gathering spot for boba and fresh eats across from UNM.

Jerry, the manager and inspiration for the business, has offered our readers a special promo, so subscribe and read on!



Phamily Tea House: Boba Made With Love & More



2132 Central Ave SE Ste B
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Monday - Saturday, 11 am - 8 pm

Across from UNM on
Yale & Central Ave.



Yale @ Central

50

Q: It's beautiful that you're pursuing your passion so fully. What ignited this in you?

Jerry: The thing that got me this passionate about opening a restaurant was my parents. Because whenever I brought my friends over to my house my parents would make sure to take time off to cook us. Which led to them later on telling me that they miss my parents cooking when they have not been over for a while, which brought me joy seeing that my friend craved my parents cooking. Seeing that made me want to cook also to recreate what my parents did for me for my kids in the future, and right now I'm gaining experience through Phamily Tea House.

Q: Family is in the name: Phamily Tea House. What inspired your parents to open this business, and how has the journey been from then to now?

Jerry: What made my parents want to open this business was that they wanted to invest into my passion, and have me learn from them while they are still able to work. The journey has been quite insightful. I'm learning the in's and out's of the business, and experiencing the situations life has to throw our way.

Q: What was the process like to get the store open?

Jerry: The process was a big learning experience because we had the idea of opening up a boba shop, but the problem was how do we stand out from the other shop that was currently available in Albuquerque. I found that all the boba shops I've been to don't really offer anything else besides bubble tea and sweet desserts, so what I thought would be a good change is to offer snacks and food to enjoy with their sweet drinks.

Picking the right location was crucial, then making the menu, after that was the permits, regulations and inspections which was quite a hassle. But once that was all done we did a family tasting to get an idea of where we needed improvement for the menu and a little bit of guest service practice.

Finally after all that hard work and time spent, it was opening day which was thrilling and scary for us because now it was time to either sink or swim.



 @phamily_tea_house

Phamily Tea House: Boba Made With Love & More



2132 Central Ave SE Ste B
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Monday - Saturday, 11 am - 8 pm

Across from UNM on
Yale & Central Ave.



Yale @ Central

50

Q: Your goal to grow the business so you can retire your parents is extremely relatable for our new generation of entrepreneurs. How can our readers support you in this goal?

Jerry: Yes, my goal is to retire my parents and have them enjoy the fruits of their labor, they done so much already for this business and for raising me with the flexibility to explore my options. A way for the readers to help support our business is to either spread the word of our business or to bring their friend and family to try our delicious food.

We are also making a new food item which will be on the menu in November:
“Mi Wonton” (Egg Noodle with Pork Wonton).

Q: What is your favorite thing about Phamily Tea House?

Jerry: My favorite thing about Phamily Tea House is being able to work with my parents and seeing them everyday, and meeting new customers and seeing their eyes open in surprise, and smile on their face when they try a food/drink that they never had before knowing that they now have a vast menu to discover.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to leave our readers with or anything I didn't ask that you'd love to touch on?

Jerry: I would like to let the readers know that I am truly appreciative of all of them taking time to read about this interview and learning a little bit more about my family story.



Phamily Tea House: Boba Made With Love & More



2132 Central Ave SE Ste B
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Monday - Saturday, 11 am - 8 pm

Across from UNM on
Yale & Central Ave.



Yale @ Central

50

Local Favorites as Told by Jerry

Food

Short Rib with Fried Rice:

One of my personal favorites. The dish is smokey, with a sweet and savory taste--and extremely tender.

Popcorn Chicken:

This is a local favorite. We have 5 dry seasonings (Chili, Salt & Pepper, BBQ, Sour Cream, and Cheese).

The most popular is chili--the crunch is to die for, and the fried basil is the chef's kiss on top.

Quarter Chicken:

The Quarter Chicken is a Vietnamese go-to. It's crunchy, salty, sweet, little spicy, and buttery. I would say if you wanted to try a different version of addictive fried chicken, this is the dish to get.

Drinks

Brown Sugar Milk Tea:

Probably our best seller. It scratches the itch for something sweet.

It's creamy and has a subtle toffee flavor from the brown sugar.

Orange Mango Fruit Tea:

The best seller of our fruit tea is sweet with a slight citrus flavor--best paired with popping boba or crystal boba.

Vietnamese Coffee:

This is a sweet/little bitter coffee that packs a punch with the rush that it gives you.

Once you get a taste, it makes you want to chug the drink--but that is not the best idea because it will leave you feeling jittery.

Jerry's Secret Special Discount for HONOR Magazine Readers!

15%
off!

I wish I had a secret menu item, but when customers have special requests, I try my best to create what they ask for.

So, instead--for all our readers--if you made it this far: **when checking out, pull out the online magazine and we will give you a 15% discount on your order.**

This will last from 10/20/25 - 11/22/25.

Amalie Coffee Co. (امالي): New Coffee Spot Just Opened



2132 Central Ave SE Ste C
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Open 7 days a week, 7:30 am - 11 pm

Across from UNM on
Yale & Central Ave.



Yale @ Central

50

Across from
UNM, right
next to
Phamily Tea
House!



Credit: Jacky So

With Amalie Coffee Co. joining the block, the shopping center across from UNM is made of about half APINH businesses!

How to support

- **Secret Menu Item:** Order the super exclusive **Cardamom Coffee**.
- Visit and let them know you saw them in **HONOR Magazine**.
- Rent out their conference/meeting/party room.

Credit: Drink photo, Ayia Awad.
Site photos, Jacky So.

Amalie (أمالي) means "My hopes & my dreams" in Arabic.

Founder **Ayia Awad** envisioned a modern and chic space that blends honoring cultural heritage, community gathering, and coffee culture.

The welcoming olive tree and plush seating greets you as you walk in the door. The row of mirrors reflect every gorgeous corner of Amalie, and you can even rent out the conference room with TV for your meetings!

If you're a productive night owl who enjoys late night café culture, you'll love that Amalie is open 7 days a week until 11 pm.

ARTS, CULTURE, &
VOICES

This Section Honors:

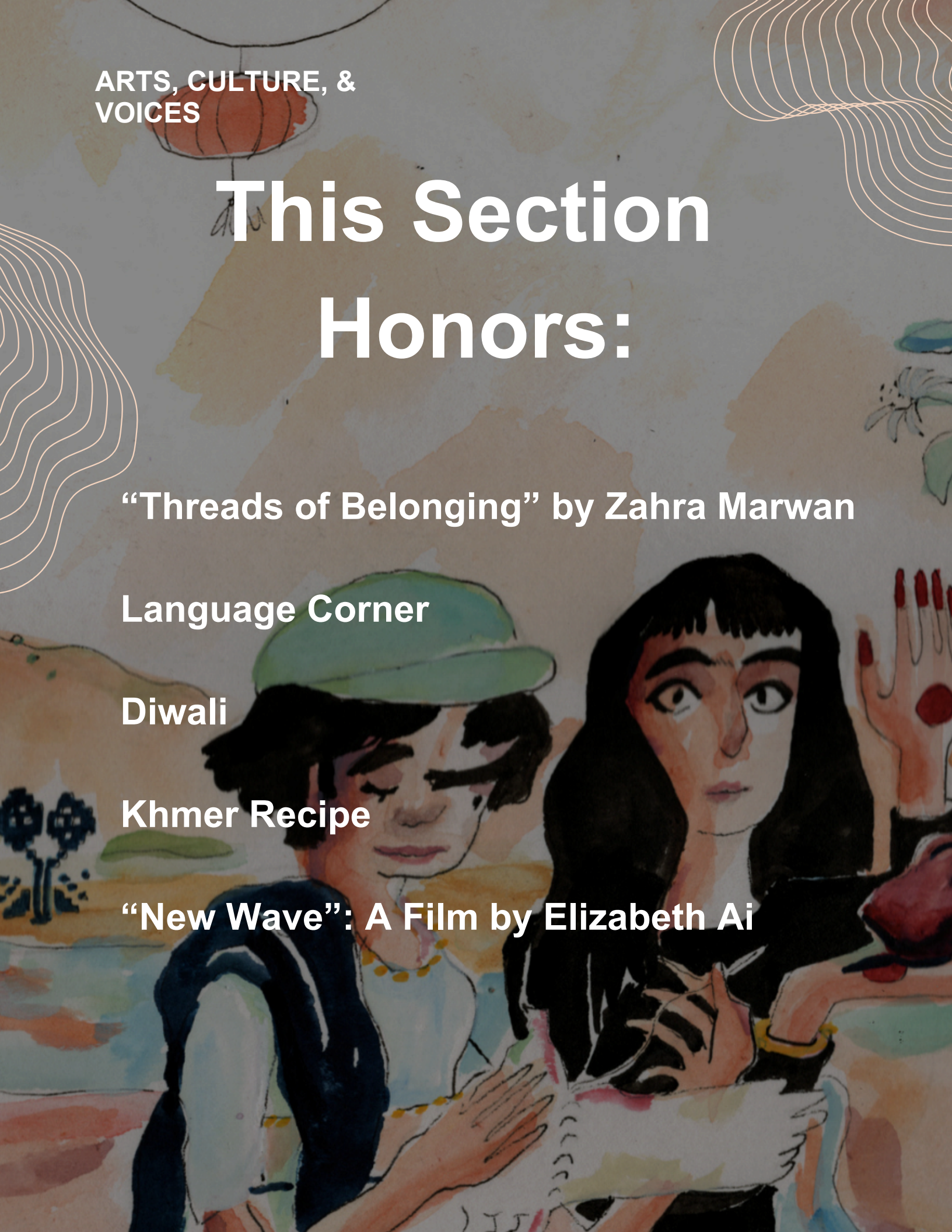
“Threads of Belonging” by Zahra Marwan

Language Corner

Diwali

Khmer Recipe

“New Wave”: A Film by Elizabeth Ai





"Threads of Belonging"
Zahra Marwan

Learn more about
internationally-renowned
watercolor & ink artist
Zahra Marwan:
zahramarwan.com

As part of this historic launch, the Office of APINH Affairs is proud to unveil a commissioned artwork by internationally renowned Albuquerque-based artist Zahra Marwan.

The piece, titled “Threads of Belonging,” reflects the heart of the Office of APINH Affairs' mission: to ensure that Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian communities are visible, celebrated, and part of Albuquerque’s story.

Marwan’s watercolor style, playful yet profound, captures both memory and imagination. In the artwork, figures stand together, holding symbols of culture, migration, and care. A lion dances across the top, lanterns and flowers bloom, and the Rio Grande River flows through the background, evoking the many journeys and traditions that have come to shape life here in New Mexico.

This artwork is a story of connection. It honors the past, welcomes the present, and looks to a future where APINH communities continue to flourish. Just as each brushstroke adds to the whole, so too does each voice and each family strengthen our collective community.

Through “Threads of Belonging,” the Office of APINH Affairs affirms its vision: a thriving Albuquerque where APINH residents are seen, heard, and empowered.



zahramarwan.com



[@zahra_marwan](https://www.instagram.com/zahra_marwan)

“Threads of Belonging”
Zahra Marwan

Learn more about
internationally-renowned
watercolor & ink artist
Zahra Marwan:
zahramarwan.com

Language Corner: How to Say “Thank You” in Different Languages

Khmer (Cambodian)

Arkoun

Sounds more like “Ah-koun”

- Arkoun: Thank you (casual)
- Saum arkoun (“Some ah-koun”): Thank you (formal/respectful)
- Arkoun chran nah: Thank you very much!

សូមអរគុណ

Tagalog (Filipino)

Salamat

- Salamat: Thank you (casual)
- Salamat po: Thank you (formal/respectful)
- Maraming salamat: Thank you very much
- Maraming salamat po: Thank you very much (very formal/respectful)

Salamat po

Arabic

Shukran

Sounds like “shoe-kran”

- Shukran: Thank you (can be used in formal and informal situations)

شكراً

Did you know that there are culturally significant and appreciated gestures that go along with the phrases?

When you say “thank you” in each language, add in the related gestures.



Khmer



Tagalog

When greeting an elder.



Arabic



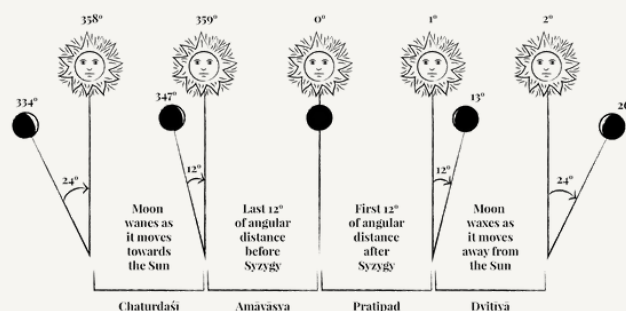
Credit: Rahul Pandit

02

Festival Highlights: Diwali

Diwali is the beautiful and meaningful Hindu festival of lights, also celebrated by Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists around the world. It symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. The word comes from Deepawali: Sanskrit word दीप (dīpa, "light") + आवलि (āvali, "series, line, row"), and dīpa (also known as "diya") refers to an Indian oil lamp.

In Hindu traditions, Diwali often marks the return of Prince Rama, with his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana, to his kingdom in Ayodhya after a 14-year exile and defeating the demon king Ravana.



Credit: Image edited from Freedom Cole

Diwali follows the **lunar calendar** and often lasts around five days, marking the end of the lunar month of Ashwin and the start of the lunar month of Kartik.

In 2025, Diwali celebrations begin on October 18 and extend to October 22.

- **Dhanteras** (Oct. 18): Marks the two-day period before Amāvāsyā (**Sanskrit**: अमावस्या), the lunar phase of the new moon.
- **Kali Chaudas** (Oct. 19): The second day of Diwali. It is believed that spirits roam around on the night of Kali Chaudas. Hanuman, the deity of strength, power, and protection, is worshipped to seek protection from the spirits.
- **Diwali** (main day) (Oct. 20): Last day of the dark fortnight of Ashwin or Kartik, where homes are aglow with lights.
- **Govardhan Puja** (Oct. 21): First day of the bright fortnight (14-days) of Kartik.
- **Bhai Dooj** (Oct. 22): "Brother's day" in Hindi that celebrates the sister-brother bond and represents brothers traveling to meet their sisters.

To welcome Diwali and celebrate renewal, people prepare for good spirits to enter their home by cleaning and decorating with diyas (oil lamps), rangolis (colorful and artistic circle patterns), and lots of good food.

Those who celebrate, gather with family and friends to pray for prosperity—especially invoking the blessing of Goddess Lakshmi.

While the rituals and stories vary across region and religion, the heart of Diwali remains the same: a celebration of light, renewal, community, and belonging.

If you celebrate Diwali or would like to give us feedback on this piece, please let us know!



cabq.gov/buildwithus



Khmer Class Noodle Salad

Recipe and photos from [Kevin @ Silk Road Recipes](#)

Glass noodles are made of mung bean flour, which does not contain gluten. When cooked, these become transparent. Keywords for noodle packaging: Glass/Cellophane/Bean thread



**Look for these ingredients at
Talin Market World Food Fare!**

Adapted Recipe After Trying It Ourselves

Get glass noodles. Cook glass noodles.

- Pour boiling water over dry noodles and let soak for a few minutes until soft and transparent. Drain water.
- Pour cold water into bowl to help detangle noodles. Drain again and set noodles aside to cool.

Add all of these into a big bowl: Sliced cabbage, onion, carrots, cucumbers, and bell peppers.

Chop roasted peanuts. This will go on top later.

Make the dressing: Add all of these into another bowl and mix until everything looks like they're getting along.

- Fish sauce (2 tbsp) + vegetable oil (1 tbsp) + whatever sugar you have (1 tbsp) + limes (2 juiced) + chicken bullion (1/2 tsp) + kosher salt (1/4 tsp)

Add everything together: Make your salad and toss to mix.

Optional: More limes (sliced) served with the salad.



Gluten-free !



Do you have a recipe you'd like to submit for a future issue? Send it in!



caba.gov/buildwithus

Mile-high hair. Synthesized music. Underground parties. Elizabeth Ai was on a mission to excavate an untold story of rebellious punks in the chaotic world of 80s Vietnamese new wave until she rediscovered a hidden past.



Credit: Courtesy of New Wave team

02

“NEW WAVE” A FILM BY ELIZABETH AI

TRT 88 minutes | color | English, Vietnamese

“New Wave” is doing a 50-state tour and has not yet screened in New Mexico. If you’d like this to happen, submit your interest and tell other folks to share theirs, too!

In the message, make sure you say “New Wave Screening”.



cabq.gov/buildwithus

What’s the film about?

Mile-high hair. Synthesized sounds. Teenage rebellion. Elizabeth Ai was on a mission to excavate an untold story of rebellious punks in the chaotic world of 80s Vietnamese New Wave until she uncovers a hidden past.

2024 - 2025 Awards and Recognitions

- Tribeca Fest: Albert Maysles Award for Best New Documentary Director, Special Jury Mention
- Austin Asian American Film Fest: Audience Award
- Middlebury New Filmmakers Fest: AICEF Cross-Cultural Filmmaking Prize
- Viet Film Fest: Grand Jury, Best Feature Film Award
- Thin Line Film Fest: Best in Sound Award
- IndieWire | The Popcorn List: 1 of 6 feature documentary films selected



“Loss, identity, the unspoken longing of mothers and daughters, fathers and sons pulsing and animated by an 80s soundtrack. This raw portrait of the American Vietnamese COMMUNITY is a story we’ve never seen before, where music becomes a way to escape from the old and belong to the new. For her powerful, evocative and emotionally honest storytelling.”

– Tribeca Film Festival Special Jury Mention and Albert Maysles Award for Best New Documentary Director



DIASPORA IN ACTION

Changemakers Across Our Diaspora

Career Stories & Advice From Our Global APINH Network
Because Coalition Building Does Not Happen in a Silo

Spotlight on Roxy Shih -

Internationally Acclaimed & Emmy-Nominated
Taiwanese-American Writer & Director, Founder of
Los Angeles' Taiwanese Film Festival

A Conversation with Roxy Shih



Jacky So

FUSE Executive Fellow &
HONOR Magazine Executive Editor

There are some friendships that stand the test of time, no matter how many cities, years, or career chapters unfold between you. Mine with Roxy is one of those rare ones: the kind that feels like picking up a conversation mid-sentence, even after months apart.

I can't begin to express how much it means to reconnect with Roxy for our inaugural Diaspora in Action feature—she represents the best of what we're trying to do for visibility across APINH populations.

Because of our schedules, we did this conversation asynchronously, exchanging thoughts across time zones and creative bursts, yet I could feel her warmth, humor, and deep sense of purpose in every response.

That's the gift of who she is: someone whose artistry and advocacy radiate even through a screen.

From co-founding the **Taiwanese American Film Festival** in Los Angeles to directing **critically acclaimed films** like *LIST OF A LIFETIME* and *BEACON* to premiering the Amazon series *Dark/Web* that she directed at Comic-Con, Roxy continues to create spaces for representation, empathy, and storytelling that center our communities.

Her work spanning film, television, and the celebrated podcast *Two Horny Goats* reminds us how the diaspora rises to adapt and redefine its narrative power.

In this special conversation, we reflect on creative courage, identity, and what it means to keep building across borders--both real and imagined.



“My existence bleeds into everything I make, whether or not it’s conscious...Living in the body of a queer, Taiwanese-American woman is a very specific experience...”



A Conversation with Roxy Shih

Jacky: Roxy, you are an internationally-acclaimed Director and very proud of your Taiwanese heritage. I've always admired your creativity, vision, and work ethic, in dance and now in movies. I always remember you as this go-getter with an infectious laugh and immense talent who made things happen and could probably do anything.

Roxy: Thanks so much for your sweet words, Jacky! I remember being always lifted by your beautiful energy. I appreciate you thinking of me for this feature.

Jacky: When did you realize filmmaking was it?

Roxy: I've always been creatively curious since I was a child. I've dipped my toe into music, dance, and visual arts from a young age but I always felt lost, unsure of a career path that would embody all of my interests at once.

I moved to LA on a whim in 2011, unsure of what the future held for me, not knowing one thing about the film industry or anyone that could get me through the door. One Craigslist opportunity led to another, and before I knew it, I was making steady progress through editing gigs. It was decent work, but it wasn't fulfilling.

I felt like something greater pulling at my soul.

A little voice in the back of my head saying, "Keep exploring, you'll find it if you keep going."

A few short years later, I found myself producing.

I was no longer in a dark edit bay by myself, but putting together financing, budgets, schedules, and crew together in support of a project I loved. I was pretty good in this new role and a lot of work came—I could have just continued down that route, but still, that voice lingered: "You haven't found it yet. Keep going."



I gathered the courage to step into directing fully in 2014 with the encouragement of my friends. I was able to fundraise enough money for a micro-budget feature called *THE TRIBE*, and went into production at the end of that year. It was in this moment that everything shifted—it all finally aligned—everything outside of me and everything within myself.

That voice in the back of my head finally said, "Ah, there you are." That's when I knew.

I think a lot of people spend their lives searching for that feeling, and I was lucky enough to have felt it when I did. I'm so glad I continued to follow this path, as one opportunity led to another, and I never regretted making that leap of faith.

Jacky: You have such an impressive creative range and vision. I'm going to list out a few:

- You were the co-founder and festival director of the Taiwanese American Film Festival based in Los Angeles.
- Your last feature film, *BEACON*, starring Academy-nominated Demian Bichir, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2024.
- Your feature film *LIST OF A LIFETIME* garnered a Critics Choice nomination for Best TV Movie in 2022.
- You directed the Amazon series *Dark/Web*, which premiered at Comic-Con. You were also nominated for a Daytime Emmy for the show.
- Your podcast, *Two Horny Goats*, was selected as one of the Top 10 Asian-American podcasts by Character Media in 2021. It also won an award for Best Hosts by the Asian Podcast Network.

Of everything you've done so far, what do you feel most proud of and why?

A Conversation with Roxy Shih

Roxy: I'm proud of all of it. Because if it wasn't for what came before, I wouldn't be where I am today. I believe that every new endeavor ventured is another thread that adds to your tapestry of life; full of color, complexity, and depth.

I'm proud of creating the festival because I felt like there was a disconnect in my community—I never imagined I could step into a role like that, but once I did, there were experiences that I could have never fathomed (like receiving a Presidential visit from Tsai Ing-Wen in our second year).

The podcast allows me to process my experience as an AAPI woman with my best friend, someone I feel safe to be vulnerable with.

And of course, I learn something new with every project I get the privilege of helming as a director. I have a growth oriented mindset, and I believe that it's all connected in my personal evolution.

Jacky: You know how UCI had the 24 Hour Film Festival (24 Hour Film Dash) when we were there--did you ever get to enjoy it? **We have something in Albuquerque called the 48 Hour Film Project**, and now that you're on the other side of it as someone who could mentor others, I'm curious about your perspective on how local communities could nurture and support local talent for programs like these.

Roxy: I think programs like this are really fun! It galvanizes communities together to play in a sandbox. The 24 hour Film Dash from UCI is a core memory for me, I remembered none of us slept. It was the wildest time - scrambling ideas with your best friends, laughing delusionally because we were so tired.

We didn't end up getting screened but those memories are priceless. My friends and I still joke about moments that we had to this day.

It's important that you don't lose your sense of play, no matter how old you are. Programs like this help cultivate new connections and opportunities within the community.

“If you're first starting out, it's important that people aren't so much investing in the project, but that they are also investing in *you*. You are a part of the pitch.”

Jacky: This one is a bit of a meaty question: Funding is always the variable for successful projects—do you have any advice or lessons to share for local creatives on how they can make the visions that live in their minds a reality?

Roxy: If you're first starting out, it's important that people aren't so much investing in the project, but that they are also investing in *you*.

You are a part of the pitch.

Why are you the right person to be making this project? Why this moment? It's important to know how to answer those questions, because it's what inevitably gets people on your side.

Spearheading a project requires you to have your heart in the right place, and that comes from a strong reason as to why you're making it. Anything that truly comes from the heart will be compelling.

Another aspect is to ensure that you're surrounding yourself with the right people. For me, that's the most important aspect--the right producer is 100% the reason why I would sign on to a project. Be mindful of the energy, and be very discerning of who you surround yourself with. Having the right partnership with a shared vision is what would inevitably ensure your path to success.

A Conversation with Roxy Shih

Jacky: For our large APINH diaspora, conditions of well-being are very much tied to visibility. Being Taiwanese-American, how does your heritage influence your work, and what is your hope for future generations?

Roxy: My existence bleeds into everything I make, whether or not it's conscious. It's in the way I move, the way I breathe, the way I speak.

Living in the body of a queer, Taiwanese-American woman is a very specific experience, and it has allowed me to empathize with people from different communities. I think it's more important than ever to be intersectional, especially in conversations that we're having, in the space we take up.

We are more alike than we think. Division is not the answer, the ability to see the humanity in each other is. Our struggles make us who we are, and right now, it's more important than ever to listen, have open dialogue, and explore nuance. **Wear your heritage with pride.** Don't cave, take up space.

It's not just in the work we do, but in the way we carry ourselves and live our lives.

Jacky: Thank you for your representation in the media and for being our featured changemaker as part of our "Diaspora in Action" series. Is there anyone you nominate for us to feature in an upcoming issue?

Roxy: Thank you for having me! I would love to nominate my friend Guo Guo, who is a trail blazing producer in the independent film world. As well as my friend Priska, a Taiwanese-American singer-songwriter and my co-host on **Two Horny Goats**.



Jacky: Do you have any parting advice for folks looking to pursue film (like ways to find opportunities or gain experience)? What are 3 things they can do?

Roxy: Passion, persistence, and resilience. You're going to get rejected a lot in this industry, but that's a part of the journey. **Calibrating your mindset is everything.** Plant a lot of seeds, water them, but manage your expectations. **Align your words with action,** and most importantly, **show up.** Say yes to opportunities. Every experience, whether it's good or bad, is a worthy one--it teaches you what to apply to yourself, and what to let go of.

Jacky: Do you have any upcoming projects? How can we follow and support your work?

Roxy: I'm currently attached to a few exciting projects that are currently being financed. I'm also actively writing and teaching on the side.

You can follow me on **instagram @roxyshih**. I'm also very proud of my podcast that I share with my best friend, Priska, called Two Horny Goats. We have deep discourse on Asian-American topics and we're available on every platform if you're keen on listening to something fun on your way to work. :)



How to Support Roxy Shih's Work

Listen to the podcast



[twohornygoats.com](https://www.twohornygoats.com)

Follow on social media



[@roxyshih](https://www.instagram.com/roxyshih)

YOUTH & FUTURE LEADERS

Youth Perspectives on Belonging

Spotlight on Melanie Jun -

UNM Class of 2027 MD Candidate,
UNM Asian Pacific American Medical
Student Association (APAMSA)
President, and APAMSA National
Board Region VII Director

Melanie Jun

UNM Class of 2027 MD Candidate,
UNM Asian Pacific American
Medical Student Association
(APAMSA) President, and APAMSA
National Board Region VII Director

At HONOR Magazine, we believe that belonging is built through stories. It's important to us that we always keep the growth of our community in mind, because building a better tomorrow takes all of us. Perspectives are not just of those who have already paved the way, but of those who are actively shaping what comes next.

Our Youth & Future Leaders series highlights voices across generations and life paths, because the future of APINH well-being depends on seeing ourselves represented at every stage of the journey.

In this issue, we feature **Melanie Jun**, UNM Class of 2027 MD Candidate, President of the UNM Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA), and National Board Region VII Director.

Melanie's leadership reflects the growing movement of young advocates who are expanding visibility, representation, and care for our communities one conversation, one connection, and one data point at a time.



Always take a moment to show kindness.

Whether it's a small gesture like offering a smile or lending a helping hand, these acts of kindness can go a long way in making someone's day better.

Melanie Jun

UNM Class of 2027 MD Candidate,
UNM Asian Pacific American
Medical Student Association
(APAMSA) President, and APAMSA
National Board Region VII Director

Youth & Future
Leaders

Q: As a future healthcare professional, what does “belonging” mean to you within medicine and the broader APINH community?

Jun: Growing up in Alamogordo, NM, my family and I were among the few Asians in our community.

I distinctly remember being the only one who looked like me in the classroom, especially at a young age, and how that affected me.

That’s why belonging holds such significance for me. In medicine, belonging means creating a space where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and understood.

It influences the relationship between physician and patient, fostering an environment that encourages honest communication and empathetic care.

Within the broader APINH community, belonging is a reminder of the importance of mentorship and our collective responsibility to uplift the next generation. It’s also about being part of something larger than yourself—a true sense of family that connects us all.

Q: What inspired you to join the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association, and how do you hope to continue building community and advocacy through your work as a future physician?

Jun: I joined APAMSA because I wanted to make a meaningful impact in my community, particularly within the APINH community. As a third-generation South Korean, I was drawn to the idea of combining my love for medicine with my cultural identity.

This organization gave me the opportunity to connect with others who shared similar experiences and values. As a future physician, my goal is not only to continue building community and advocacy but also to volunteer in underserved areas. I believe that giving back—whether through time or effort—has a profound impact with a rippling effect.

I aspire to be a faculty member at the local chapter of APAMSA at my future University Hospital, ideally at UNM. I also aim to serve in communities that face social disparities, ensuring that those who need help most receive the care and support they deserve.

Q: When you imagine the next generation of APINH leaders and healthcare providers, what kind of changes or progress do you hope to see—in Albuquerque, in New Mexico, or nationally?

Jun: With social media playing a bigger and bigger role in shaping younger generations, I hope the future APINH leaders and healthcare providers can strike a balance between online and offline engagement.

My hope is that we move beyond the screen to connect with our communities in person—whether through volunteering, or simply spending time with others from diverse backgrounds.

These real-life interactions will cultivate the inclusion and diversity needed to create stronger, more compassionate future leaders in healthcare and beyond.

How to Support Melanie Jun’s Work

Contact at
[mjun\[at\]salud.unm.edu](mailto:mjun[at]salud.unm.edu)



YOUTH & FUTURE LEADERS

Youth Perspectives on Belonging

**Nominate or submit
someone to be
featured next!**



cabq.gov/buildwithus

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT &
RESOURCES**

This Section Covers...

**How to Get Involved:
Boards, Commissions, & Volunteering**

**Explained Simply:
Superfund Sites & Health**

**Resource Guide:
Language Access, Business, &
Passports**

AND

Low income

People in households where income is less than or equal to twice the federal poverty level, not including students enrolled in higher ed

Transportation

How to Get Involved: Boards, Commissions, & Volunteering

Did you know that you could serve on a City of Albuquerque or New Mexico State Board or Commission?

There are plenty of vacancies that need to be filled, so why not you?

If you're even a little intrigued about the opportunity, you should apply.

Volunteering or applying to serve gives you a voice in decision-making—from land use to public safety to cultural affairs.

Why is this important for APINH?

- Participation ensures the needs and perspectives of Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian communities are included in policy discussions and resource allocation.
- It builds civic power and accountability in spaces that often lack diverse representation.

City of Albuquerque

Explore the Boards & Commissions:
<https://www.cabq.gov/clerk/boards-commissions>

Good to Know:
The Human Rights Board is looking for an At-Large Representative. If you are APINH, serving on this would help encourage visibility in the diaspora.

Ready to apply? Fill out the form! >>

New Mexico

Good to Know:
They are looking for 2026, so apply if you're interested!

New Mexico has Boards and Commissions that are specific to industries—this could be a great way to represent your community and career expertise.

Contact the state if you're interested >>

Looking to Volunteer or Need Volunteers?:
<https://www.cabq.gov/abq-volunteers/abq-volunteers>

Explained Simply: Superfund Sites & Health

What is a Superfund site? Why is it important for APINH?

A “Superfund site” is a heavily polluted area identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as needing cleanup due to hazardous substances. The National Priorities List prioritizes these for funding and action.

Why is this important for APINH?

- Toxic contamination disproportionately affects marginalized neighborhoods, including many where Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian residents live.
- Ensuring these sites are cleaned protects health, enables safe redevelopment, and safeguards future generations.
- According to data from previous Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), it’s estimated that **almost 1 in 10** APINH live near Carlisle Village Cleaners, a site recently added to EPA’s priority list.
 - This is likely even a low count, since it relies on Census data, which omits results if a population threshold is not met. It also does not take into account anyone who might have answered “Other” as their demographic.

What They’re Saying

“It was the residents’ commitment throughout the public comment process that ultimately brought an end to decades of exposure. The NPL funding for the remediation and clean-up of the contaminated areas offers the City the opportunity to build a safer environment and revive economic opportunity for future generations in this historic community.”

– District 6 City Councilor Nichole L. Rogers

“Our communities deserve clean air, clean water, and a safe environment...”

– U.S. Representative Melanie Stansbury

The site is located at **3611 Simms Ave. SE** within City Council District 6 and contains a chlorinated solvent soil gas plume that is centered at two former dry cleaner facilities once located within a small strip mall.

[View the Press Release >>](#)

“Now that the former Carlisle Village Cleaners site has been added to the Superfund National Priorities List, we can begin to properly monitor and clean up this site as quickly as possible, protecting the health and safety of local residents, and spurring economic growth for the future.”

– Senator Martin Heinrich

Resource Guide: Language Access, Business & Property Grants, & Passport Services That Fund Education

APINH-friendly services (translation, business, education).

Language Access

<https://www.cabq.gov/police/language-access>

<https://www.nmafc.org/services>

Business & Property Grants

The **Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)** hosts rolling grants.

Check the website regularly—if it's still posted to the website, it's still accepting applications!

cabq.gov/mra/mra-boutique/business-property-grants

Passport Services That Fund Education

Passports > UNM > Helps Support Scholarships

Did you know that UNM has passport services?

Open to the general public, if you use UNM for your passport services, it helps support scholarships.

It's a great way to feel like a task you have to do actually helps the community.

<https://passport.unm.edu/>

Let us know if there's a resource we're missing.



cabq.gov/buildwithus



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT**

Small Business Office

**Custom One-On-One Business Assistance
& Tax Incentives Information**

Small Business Office: Custom One-On-One Business Assistance & Tax Incentives Information

Customized business support (mentorship, planning, regulatory guidance) helps small enterprises survive and thrive, especially in the startup phase.

Why is this important for APINH?

Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian communities are highly entrepreneurial, but often lack access to capital or culturally responsive guidance. One-on-one assistance helps reduce barriers, fosters inclusive growth, and strengthens community economic resilience.

Did you know there are a ton of small business resources for you?

If your business has 500 employees or less, you qualify for a host of things!

Workforce development, job training--upskill your employees with free training.

Customized one-on-one business assistance, local economic development incentives, and more!

[Visit the City's Small Business Office >>](#)

Kids working in a family business can get paid.

Did you know that if your kids are working in your family business, you can pay your kids and unlock a host of tax incentives?

For example, any minor with earned income—including from a family business—can save for retirement by contributing to a Roth IRA. This money can be invested and grows tax-free. It's one strategy that can offer significant tax benefits for you and your child.

How many of us wish we knew information like this when we were younger?

This is not just wealth building, but also wealth preservation and retention for our APINH community.

[Contact our Financial Empowerment Office >>](#)

NOTE: Not tax or financial advice. For informational purposes only. Consult with your own advisor or reach out to our Financial Empowerment Office for more resources.

**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
LOOP**

Your Voice Matters

Share Feedback & Visibility

Our goal is to make this your space.
This is a community-endorsed library, and we are
building our new office together.

Give us feedback on our first-ever magazine issue
so we know what to improve. Did you like this
layout? Did you find this issue valuable?
What should we feature next?
We're all ears!



cabq.gov/buildwithus

WHAT'S NEXT

Events & Ways to Contribute to HONOR Magazine



Credit: Seilapak Khyom

02

What's Next: Events, Things of Interest, & Ways to Contribute

Cambodian American Studies Conference in Stockton, Oct 24-25

The Orange County Department of Education is introducing the Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum (CASMC) at conferences between 2024 and 2026.



Do you have an APINH event coming up?
Do you want to share about how you observe or celebrate any of our holidays?
Are there community milestones you would love others to know about?

What We're Looking For

This is just the first issue of HONOR Magazine. We need you to build this space with us—let's dream and do together!

- Subscribe, contribute, or partner.
- Tell us what you'd like to see in future issues.
- Submit your work to be featured.
- Tell us if you're interested in having this magazine translated into other languages, or if you would like to serve as a language editor for future articles or issues.



cabq.gov/buildwithus



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website.

www.cabq.gov/apinh

