

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ASIAN AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD



Office of the Chair

Office of Community Advocacy

Board of County Commissioners

Joshua Ho, Program Director

Established on July 22, 1997, its mission is: to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administration, the community, and all agencies and persons in Miami-Dade County, Florida, with respect to matters pertaining to the Asian community of Miami-Dade County.

STAY CONNECTED:

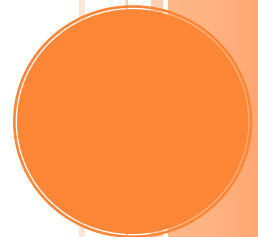
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Miami-Dade County

Asian American Advisory Board

Whereas the status of Asian Americans has long been ignored and has been underrepresented in the halls of government and other public and private institutions, the Board of County desires to recognize the contributions of Asian Americans to the cultural, political, social and economic life of Miami-Dade County. On July 21, 1997 the Asian-American Advisory Board was created in an advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners, the County administration, and the community. This board has to be composed by twenty-six (26) permanent residents and electors of the county who shall have knowledge and interest in the Asian community living in the County. Each of the thirteen County Commissioners appoints two members for a period of three years. The quorum necessary to hold a meeting and take any action is of fourteen (14) members. The meetings are open to the public and are called by written notice of the fourteen members.

The board focus is to empower the Asian community by engaging public officials, connecting with other communities and educating the community at large about the Asian issues and needs. In order to achieve its goals the Board works individually and collectively representing the Asian diversity in Miami-Dade County and also serves as an advocate and supporter of the Asian Americans in civic, cultural, commercial and community affairs.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD

1. **To serve in an advisory capacity to the County Commission, the County administration, the community, and all agencies and persons in Miami-Dade County, Florida with respect to matter pertaining to the Asian community of Miami-Dade County.**
2. **To formulate and recommend policies, plans, programs and services and to coordinate the activities of governmental entities and non-governmental agencies pertaining to the Asian community.**
3. **To serve as a medium for responsible persons to utilize and consult with in attempting to understand and address the various complex problems affecting the Asian community in Miami-Dade and to make findings and recommendation to the County Commissioners and the County administration regarding such matters.**
4. **To recommend solution to the social, economic, cultural and political problems in the Asian community, as well as to serve as liaison between the Asian community and the Miami-Dade County community at large.**
5. **To promote active participation of Asian Americans in civic, cultural, commercial and community affairs.**
6. **To encourage and attract Asian business to Miami-Dade County, to assist Asian business located in Dade County and to promote economic development, especially job creation in Miami-Dade County.**
7. **To foster relationship with public officials and maintain formal channels of communication so that the Asian concerns are effectively transmitted and heard.**
8. **To promote positive images and concepts of Asia and Asian Americans as well as promote their many contributions to our society.**
9. **To build coalitions with various community groups to address issues of common concerns, such as advocating positive legislation regarding immigration and advocating legislation to strengthen the penalties for racially motivated crimes.**
10. **To promote the cultural heritage of Asian Americans.**

11. **To encourage and assist in citizenship registration and voter registration.**
12. **Eliminate ignorance and bigotry towards Asian Americans.**
13. **To conduct studies through fact-finding and analysis of problems encountered by Asian community members.**
14. **The board shall report at least annually to the Commission as to its activities, findings and recommendations.**
15. **To perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to it by resolution of the Miami-Dade County Commission.**

Activities and Performance

Homeland Security and FBI's Director's Community Leadership Award Recognition

During the past twenty years the Miami-Dade County Asian American Advisory Board has worked diligently to promote and advance the mission given to us by the Board of County Commissioners; however, occasional interruption beyond our control often dictated the course such as the events of September 11, 2001.

The Board suddenly became a Crisis Management Desk within a week after 9/11. It had to perform a balancing act between homeland security and protection of the civil rights of the Asian/Muslim American community. The Board worked with law enforcement agencies on the one hand and working with the U.S. Department of Justice on the other to protect people's rights. The FBI and several local agencies sought our service to train their staff. In fact, the FBI regularly attended the monthly Board meeting for years. This relationship finally culminated into the Board being awarded the FBI's prestigious Director's Community Leadership Award in 2012 in Washington D.C.

In the last several years the Board, in collaboration with *COSMOS* (Coalition of South Florida Muslim Organizations), has organized the FBI's community outreach and training by arranging several presentations including workshops such as Cybercrime: Protection from Pedophiles and Identity Theft.

Cultural and Educational Activities

The Board of County Commissioners expressed keen interest in fostering cultural sensitivity and promoting understanding among the various communities in Miami-Dade County as well as establishing political engagement ties with the Asian community and generating general awareness about the presence of the Asian Americans in Miami-Dade County.

During the last twenty years, the Board steadily increased its role in high profile Asian cultural events in the community and established an active collaboration with various community based Asian organizations that are engaged in such activities. In terms of cultural promotion and education, the Board placed high importance on festivals, exhibits, and outreach workshops. At the present time, the following events are a permanent part of the Asian community cultural calendar:

- Chinese New Year Festival
- Asian Culture Festival
- Asian American Heritage Night with the Miami Heat
- Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebrations
- Community Recognition Dinner

Chinese New Year Festival

On the 3rd Sunday of February in 2016 and 2017, 10,000 people attended the Annual Chinese New Year Festival held at the Miami-Dade College – Kendall Campus. People came to watch the entertainment, taste the varied delectable foods, and buy Asian products. This event marks the beginning of the colorful Asian cultural calendar each year. The lion and dragon dance opens up the Chinese celebrations to bring in good luck and prosperity. The New Year is one of the most important celebrations for people of Chinese descent – it signifies a new beginning; it is a time for reunions with family and friends and to give thanks for what has transpired the previous year and to welcome a new year.

Legend has it that Buddha had asked all the animals to meet him on Chinese New Year. Twelve animals came and Buddha named a year after each one. People born in that animal's year would have the traits of that particular animal.

The Annual Chinese New Year Festival hosted two shows displaying the athleticism, musical talent and beauty of Asia.

In addition to the huge crowd, more than 175 vendors and approximately 200 performers participated in the event. Many performers and dignitaries traveled from out of town. During the last three years this festival also hosted the Chinese Consul General from Houston. The economic impact of this event on Miami-Dade County is estimated to be approximately \$300,000 which is generated from business activity, park fees, insurance, performer cost, and bed tax generated from guests staying in our hotels. The Festival also provides a respectable income to mom and pop vendors in these dire economic times.

The Asian Culture Festival

This Asian Culture Festival is held on the first weekend of March at the Fruit and Spice Park in Homestead. It is the largest Asian festival hosted in South Florida and draws more than 10,000 fans from across the tri-county area. It highlights the cultural diversity of Asia. A large number of Asian Consulates and local organizations representing various Asian countries set up education booths showcasing their respective countries. The Festival offers a program full of cultural performances by acrobats to Taiko Drummers to a fashion show presenting colorful, traditional Asian clothes. This event attracts two hundred plus vendors, merchandizers, Asian artists, crafters, jewelry makers, and costume designers. Tropical plants, fruits and a variety of Asian cuisines are also sold. A large number of out-of-town performers contribute to the Miami-Dade County economy as well. It is estimated that this event generates close to \$400,000 in sales, park fees, hotel rentals, taxes, insurance and cost of other services. It brings a much needed income to several small businesses that set up their shops at the event.

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration

The month of May was declared Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage month on October 29, 1992. This was intended to honor the achievements of the Asian/Pacific Americans and to recognize their contributions to the United States of America.

May was selected for the recognition because two significant events in history in that month: Japanese immigrants first arrived in the United States of America on May 7, 1843, and the transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869 (Golden Spike Day). Furthermore, since school is still in session during May, educators have the chance to capitalize on the opportunity to include APA history into the curriculum.

The Miami-Dade County Asian American Advisory Board celebrates this month in collaboration with many partners across the county including the Miami Dade College, Asian Pacific American Bar Association of South

Florida, National Association of Asian American Professionals, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

This extensive celebration is finally capped by the Community Recognition Celebration Dinner.

Conventions

Section 5 and 6 in Duties and Responsibilities of County Ordinance No. 97-128 encourage The Board to attract Asian businesses and organizations to the community and to encourage the community to engage in commercial activities. During the past several years, the Board has been very active in facilitating and inviting various organization to hold their major events such as conventions in Miami-Dade County. Some of the organizations include the Association of Pakistani Physicians in North America [Marriot Biscayne Bay, 200+ guests], the Iranian American Medical Association [Hilton, Downtown], the Asian American Journalist's Association of America [400 guests], the National Law Student Association of America [Hyatt Regency, Downtown, 150 guests], Coalition of South Florida Muslim Organizations [Hilton, Airport, 300+ guests] and Federation of Bangladeshi Associations in North America [Hyatt Regency, Downtown, 1000+ guests]. In each case, hundreds of visitors came, stayed, and spent.

Affiliated Organizations

SAHARA

10290 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami Shores

The Board has taken the social responsibility to serve the needy in the community very seriously. It co-founded SAHARA, with the Women's Fund of Miami to help the Asian victims of domestic violence. SAHARA has since become an independent 501c3, not for profit organization. It has helped more than 60 victims past years. Its range of services deals from providing family counseling to psycho-therapy, legal assistance to enable the victims to become economically independent and rescuing the victims and placing them in safe places. Presently, SAHARA's budget is approximately \$50,000 a year. However, many generous members of the community often directly help the victims who they refer to SAHARA for support and assistance.

UHI Community Care Clinic

4851 Miami Garden's Drive. Miami Gardens

The Asian community is undoubtedly very proud of this project. This Clinic is located at 4851 Miami Gardens Drive (NW 183rd Street), and it provides free preventative medical care to the needy and uninsured. The Clinic was started by the Muslim Community of South Florida, including the Muslim members of the Board. It is manned by Muslim physicians and healthcare workers. Though it is located in District 1, a part of the initial seed money was provided by Commissioner Javier Souto of District 10. At the present time, the clinic operates Mondays through Friday from 10am -4pm and Saturdays from 10am-2pm. The Clinic offers a wide range of care for most medical problems, beginning with an office visit with our nurse or one of our volunteer physicians. Lab work, tests, X-rays, procedures, nutritional counseling, and referrals to specialists are available to qualified Clinic patients as determined by Clinic practitioners. The Clinic offers some women's services, including pap smears as determined by Clinic practitioners. These referrals for female services are for established clinic patients. Once a month, Clinic provides GYN services by appointment only.

In the absence of the preventative care provided by UHI Clinic, these patients would end up in the Emergency Room and cost Miami-Dade County Healthcare approximately \$1,005,000. Therefore, the total impact of this volunteer facility to our community would be in excess of a million dollars.

NANAY Community Center

651 NE 125th Street, North Miami

This is undoubtedly the oldest and most engaged Asian institution in Miami-Dade County. It was established twenty-four years ago by a physician by the name of Dr. Joy Bruce.

The National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth began as a recreation facility for the elders of the Filipino community and has since become an Asian Community Center that provides a wide range of services to the entire community – Asian or otherwise. Presently, NANAY, through the NANAY Community Economic Development Corporation provides homebuyer education, housing counseling, case management, government subsidy assistance to first time homebuyers, and foreclosure intervention programs. Homebuyer services include orientation seminars, pre-purchase counseling, homebuyer education classes, case management and social services referrals. Clients learn how to repair their credit and create a monthly budget; how to navigate the process of pre-qualification and pre-approval; and how to understand the different portions of their mortgage payment. In addition to the programs mentioned above, NANAY provides computer training, financial literacy programs, citizenship assistance and voter registration support. The organization clocks approximately 600 plus volunteer hours and much more in their services.

Asian Community Resources Center

16320 NW 48th Ave, Miami Gardens, FL 33014

Established in 2015, Asian Community Resources Center (ACRC) provides services for our community seniors: supported by a safe, sanctioned place for a comprehensive network of culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate programs and services, assisting them to access mainstream elder services and maintain their independence. Classes and Programs include Tai-Chi, Physical Fitness, Cantonese Opera, Folk Song Group, Arts & Craft, Cooking & Baking, Movie Appreciation, Flower Arrangement, Computer Literacy, Social Networking, Spiritual Discussion/Forums and Health Discussion/Forums.

Florida Asian Services

651 NE 125th Street, North Miami

Established in 2018, Florida Asian Services is dedicated to advancing the civic and political participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Americans (AAPI) through citizenship and civic education services, nonpartisan voter mobilization and education, as well as community services & outreach. Its mission is to increase voter participation among Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and beyond in South Florida area. Florida Asian Services (FAS) works directly with partners in the field to increase participation in these communities.

Engaging Elected Officials

The *Duties and Responsibilities* mandated by the Board of County Commissioners suggests that the Asian Board facilitate community engagement with elected officials and the County establishment.

The Board has taken the opportunity and connected with Commissioners during the last years through community forums or indirect meetings with them. The Board assisted several community members in various areas with their needs, such as procurement, variance, and re-zoning.