

The Asian Reporter

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19th Annual Scholarship & Awards Banquet



COMMUNITY CELEBRATION. Performers with the Mandaue Children's Choir from the Philippines entertain a crowd of more than 325 at The Asian Reporter Foundation's 19th Annual Scholarship & Awards Banquet held at the TAO Event Center in northeast Portland. The gala event, held in advance of Asian Heritage Month, featured cultural entertainment and recognized the efforts and achievements of Asian-American elders, community organizations, and scholars. Our special section highlighting the accomplishments of our 2017 awardees begins on page 8. (AR Photo/Jin Huang)

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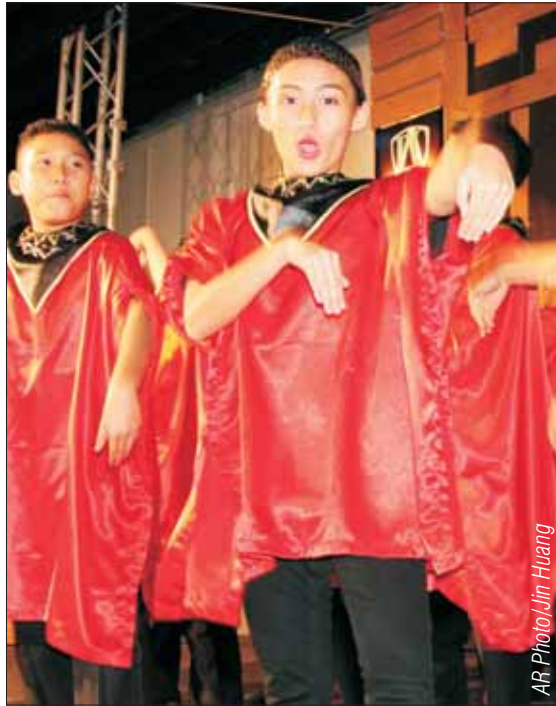
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BOISTEROUS BANQUET. Amanda Shannahan of Unit Souzou (top left photo) entertains the crowd at The Asian Reporter Foundation's 19th Annual Scholarship & Awards Banquet. Other performers at the gala event included the Mandaue Children's Choir (middle photo) and the Lee's Association Dragon & Lion Dance Team (right photo). In addition to cultural entertainment, the evening featured the 2017 Most Honored Elder awards, recognition of area Exemplary Community Volunteers, the issuing of Asian Reporter Foundation scholarships (bottom left photo), dinner, and a silent auction.

The AR Foundation's annual gala celebrates community

By Kathleen Liermann
The Asian Reporter

The Asian Reporter Foundation recently celebrated its 19th annual scholarship and awards banquet. More than 325 people enjoyed an evening of dancing, cultural entertainment, awards, and a silent auction at the TAO Event Center in northeast Portland.

Attendees mingled with old friends while meeting new ones, bid on numerous silent auction items — from gift cards and weekend getaways to acupuncture treatments and backpacks — witnessed members of the community receiving numerous awards, and dined on a delicious feast of lumpia, yakisoba noodles, Korean chicken, Portuguese sausage, Korean ribs, stir-fried veggies, macaroni salad, and rice, catered by Bamboo Grove Hawaiian Grille.

Zeke Smith, the evening's master of ceremonies, opened the festivities and introduced the Lee's Association Dragon & Lion Dance Team, which performed onstage before filtering out among the tables of banquet-goers. People pulled out their smartphones to snap photos of the vivid red, gold, and white lions winding around the tables of the banquet hall. At the conclusion of the performance, *Asian Reporter* publisher Jaime Lim welcomed everyone and thanked them for their support of the annual event.

While diners filled their plates and sipped beverages,

the Mandaue Children's Choir, who the day before had just arrived in the U.S. from the Philippines, took the stage to entertain the crowd. The young people, decked out in shiny red tops and black pants, wowed the audience with their harmony and choreographed movements. Attendees were mesmerized by the young singers, who ranged in age from seven to 16 years old.

After the performance, the first awards were presented to this year's Most Honored Elders. For 2017, they included Benny Avecilla and Christine Chin Ryan, two incredibly involved individuals.

Avecilla, who immigrated to the United States in 1977 from the Philippines, has been involved in the Portland-area Filipino community for about four decades. Ryan, who came to the U.S. in 1966, has been an advocate for the Asian Pacific American community and small businesses for three decades.

The commitment of Avecilla and Ryan were recognized by the hundreds in attendance, who gave them an enthusiastic round of applause.

The next performance featured members of Unit Souzou — Michelle Fujii, Amanda Shannahan, Scott Miyako, and Gregg Humphrey — who energized the crowd. The group engaged everyone in the room and also invited a few lucky audience members to join them on stage to try out their taiko drumming skills.

Awards were then given to this year's scholars. The

2017 Asian Reporter Foundation scholars included Ryan Horiuchi, Phuong Nguyen, Nancy Nguyen, Whitney Warth, Dawa Gyalpo, Ayush Kumar, Yan-Tung Choi, Phuong Thao Ly, and Vivian Duong, who each received awards for college ranging between \$2,000 and \$2,500.

Following the Asian Reporter Foundation awards were the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) scholars — Brittney Pioquinto and Maria Schaljo — who were each awarded \$500 scholarships.

The final awards of the evening — recognition given for an Exemplary Community Volunteer Effort by an organization — were then handed out. The three groups — Aguman Capampangan Northwest U.S.A., the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) - Portland Lodge, and Lac Hong Vietnamese School — have contributed to the Asian community for a combined 130 years.

From medical missions and leadership conferences to community-service projects and language classes, each group possesses a unique history as well as many years of accomplishments and contributions.

After the final auction tables closed, people claimed their treasures. The evening ended with music, dancing, and more mingling. The foundation extends many thanks to this year's attendees and invites everyone to join the 20th anniversary celebration, which will take place in April of 2018.

The Asian Reporter Foundation extends many thanks to our banquet sponsors. Without them, this annual event would not be possible.

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Most Honored Elders



INFLUENTIAL ELDERS. The Asian Reporter Foundation's Most Honored Elders for 2017 are Christine Chin Ryan (left) and Benny Avecilla (right). (AR Photo/Jan Landis)

Benny Avecilla

Benny Avecilla was born in Sorsogon, the Philippines, the son of Gregorio Madrid Avecilla and Irene Otano. He was married for 54 years to the late Carmen Deona Avecilla, an engineer, and has five daughters: Lorna, Maryanne, Gail, Lynn, and Sheila. While living in the Philippines, he worked for the Emerito Ramos Corporations as an accountant, office manager, and assistant vice president. Benny immigrated to the U.S. in April of 1977 and ended up in Portland via San Francisco. He worked for the West Coast Marine Co. as an accountant, and later was employed by the St Paul Insurance Company until his retirement. He has been an active member of the Filipino-American Association of Portland & Vicinity since 1980 and served as chairman of the board for three years and president for eight years during his nearly four decades with the organization. He volunteers with St. Ignatius Church as well as the Meals on Wheels program of Loaves & Fishes. He is an avid bowler and organized the Fil-Am bowling league. He currently serves as the international director of the Filipino Canadian American (FilCanAm) Bowling Tournament. Benny has five grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

Christine Chin Ryan

Christine Chin Ryan was born in Trinidad and Tobago to Alexander and Ann Chin, their fifth of six children. Her parents had immigrated to Trinidad and Tobago from China and in 1966, the family immigrated to New York City when the U.S. increased the number of immigrants allowed from certain countries, including those in the Caribbean. Christine married her husband, Patrick Ryan, in 1979. They have lived in Oregon for nearly 39 years. Christine has run a small business in the technology industry for 29 years. She is a passionate advocate for small businesses and is also very active in politics. Among her many activities, she is an ambassador for the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC) of Oregon and Southwest Washington and a member of the City of Portland's Small Business Minority Evaluator Program (MEP); moderated candidate forums for the Villages at Mount Hood for the past six years; served as a state organizer for the Women's March on Washington in Oregon in January of this year; volunteered for the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton; served as secretary for the AAPI Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon (DPO) and treasurer of the DPO Environmental Caucus; and more.

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Exemplary Community Volunteers



Aguman Capampangan Northwest U.S.A.

Aguman Capampangan Northwest U.S.A., which was founded in 1996 as a social club for Pampangans, is a nonprofit Filipino-American organization based in Portland that promotes Kapampangan and Filipino culture, serves the northwest community, and supports the Philippines through humanitarian work. The organization raises funds through yearly Christmas carolling and a lu'au dinner and dance event, the most recent of which boasted more than 500 attendees. Aguman promotes culture by holding Santa Cruzan events and an annual La Naval Fiesta celebration. The organization sent its tenth mission to the Philippines this past February, providing more than 3,500 people with medical and dental services as well as distributing relief goods in the form of rice, canned food, noodles, slippers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and more to people in need in Pampanga province. In addition to its work in the Philippines, Aguman also provides assistance locally by feeding homeless people in the Portland area. To learn more, visit <www.agumancapampangan.org>.



Chinese American Citizens Alliance - Portland Lodge

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) was founded in 1895 in San Francisco as a social club and a national non-partisan organization advocating for Chinese-American empowerment and community service. The Portland chapter — which was established in 1921 — has a membership mailing list of 175. C.A.C.A. Portland has a three-fold mission: to develop leadership, serve the community, and promote civil rights. To this end, the organization hosts the annual Asian American Youth Leadership Conference as well as an annual retreat; awards scholarships to high school seniors; promotes civic engagement with voter registration, ballot measure education, and translating ballots; offers alcohol-server education classes in Mandarin and Cantonese; supports youth basketball with two teams, the Dragons and Tsunamis; donates gift cards to seniors at the Asian Health & Service Center; and many other community-oriented activities. To learn more, visit <www.cacaportland.org>.



Lac Hong Vietnamese School

The Lac Hong Vietnamese School was formed in 2004 to promote and preserve Vietnamese culture, to mentor youth, and to facilitate cooperation among Vietnamese Americans. The language school, which started with 88 students at its inception, has grown to an enrollment of more than 200 students from Pre-K to level seven, who take classes in the Vietnamese language, culture, dance, LEGO robotics, lion dance, and art. The classes, taught by 58 active volunteer teachers, meet at Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus on Saturday afternoons. In the past year, students at Lac Hong Vietnamese School have performed cultural dances at community events, including Culture Days at Washington Square mall and the Vietnamese Community of Oregon's Lunar New Year celebration. The organization also supports Tieng Hoai Huong, a music group promoting and teaching Asian traditional instruments; True Connection; the Portland State University Vietnamese Student Association; the Asian American Youth Leadership Club at David Douglas High School; Vietnamese Scouts; and the Vietnamese Community of Oregon. In addition, the school also holds a Volunteer Day to support the local Oregon Food Bank. To learn more, visit <www.vscso.org>.

(AR Photos/Jan Landis)

Nomination forms for the 2018 Exemplary Community Volunteer awards will be available January 1, 2018 and will cover volunteer efforts performed between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018. For more information, visit <www.ARFoundation.net> or <www.asianreporter.com>.

An online version of this scholarship & awards banquet special issue is available at <www.asianreporter.com>.

AR Foundation Scholars



2017 Asian Reporter Foundation Scholars (left to right, top row down): Ryan Horiuchi, Phuong Nguyen, Nancy Nguyen, Whitney Warth, Dawa Gyalpo, Ayush Kumar, Yan-Tung Choi, Phuong Thao Ly, and Vivian Duong. (AR Photos)

Ryan Horiuchi

\$2,500 sponsored by the Oregon Lottery
 Ryan Horiuchi, a senior at Central Catholic High School, is the son of Rick Pasha Horiuchi and Eileen Horiuchi. He is captain of his school's lacrosse team and is a team leader on the football team. He has also worked at David Efaw Productions as a blackjack dealer and equipment mover. Ryan is a volunteer at the Blanchet House soup kitchen and has donated time to the Oregon Food Bank and The Grotto. At Central Catholic, he is a member of the Japan Club and National Honor Society. Ryan plans to study business administration at the University of Oregon.

Phuong Nguyen

\$2,500 sponsored by the Oregon Lottery
 Phuong Nguyen, daughter of Danh Thanh Nguyen and Van Thi Bich Pham, is a junior at Portland State University (PSU). She works as a server and sushi chef at Marinepolis Sushiland, teaches Vietnamese at the Van Lang Vietnamese Language School, and is a choreographer and leader for the Portland Community College (PCC) Vietnamese dance club. She also volunteers as a student coordinator for the Vietnamese Community of Oregon and has served as a student leader for the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, PCC's Vietnamese Club president, and a communication intern at the American Red Cross. In addition, she served as a STEAM Club coordinator in math and as a PCC club coordinator. Phuong is currently studying marketing at PSU.

Nancy Nguyen

\$2,000 sponsored by Comcast NBC Universal
 Nancy Nguyen, the daughter of Thien and Hue Nguyen, is a senior at Central Catholic High School. She volunteers with Adventist Medical Center discharging patients and helping nurses, and has given her time to Randall Children's Hospital in the gift shop and helps students with homework at Portland After School Tennis and Education. At Central Catholic, Nancy is president of the Asian and Pacific Islander club, a peer tutor for National Honor Society, a cast member in the school's musical productions of *Godspell* and *All Shook Up*, a school ambassador, and was a member of the cross country team. She has attended Vietnamese school for 12 years and was also a traditional Vietnamese dancer at church. She plans to study civil engineering at Gonzaga University.

Whitney Warth

\$2,000 sponsored by United Way of the Columbia-Willamette
 Whitney Warth, a senior at Central Catholic High School, is the daughter of William and Shelley Warth. She is president of Central Catholic's Japan club and serves as a peer tutor, peer mediator, and school ambassador. Whitney is on the varsity cheerleading squad, serving as its captain, and is a member of the Mock Trial team. Her volunteer activities include acting as a trainer and dispatcher for Adventist Medical Center and a team lead at the Oregon Humane Society. She has also volunteered with the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center as a greeter and guide and at her school and church as a lector and Eucharistic minister. She plans to study biology at the University of Oregon.

Dawa Gyalpo

\$2,000 sponsored by the City of Portland
 Dawa Gyalpo, the daughter of Lobsang and Ngawang Dhashi, is a senior at Central Catholic High School. She volunteers as a teacher at the Northwest Tibetan Cultural Association (NWTCA) Tibetan language school, is a team leader on the Tibetan dance team, and is a peer tutor and peer mediator at Central Catho-

lic. In addition, Dawa has volunteered more than 250 hours for Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, and has also volunteered for the NWTCA speech and debate team, Oregon Food Bank, Providence Child Center, and other organizations. At Central Catholic, she is a member of the Asian Club, where she serves as co-president; Japan Club; Girls Alliance; the SADD club; and more. Dawa plans to attend the University of Oregon Honors College.

Ayush Kumar

\$2,000 sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank
 Ayush Kumar, the son of Jai and Asha Kumar, is currently a third-year student at Concordia University, where he is an Honors Program member and is on the dean's list. In addition to his coursework, Ayush works at the Concordia University library, monitoring the circulation desk, cataloguing material, and more. He volunteers with Teacher Corps as a biology and math tutor, as well as at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center as an emergency department volunteer, and has belonged to the Pre-Health Professionals Club for three years. He also participates in the Concordia University Ambassador Program and Hiking Club. Ayush is majoring in biology with minors in Spanish and psychology.

Yan-Tung Choi

\$2,000 sponsored by Travel Portland
 Yan-Tung Choi, the daughter of Lawrence Choi and Kitty Tsang, is a senior at Franklin High School. Among her many activities, Yan-Tung has volunteered with the Franklin High School Chinese Club, Key Club, Portland State University (PSU) Hong Kong Student Association, and the Asian Health & Service Center (AHSC) for cultural and fundraising events, and she has worked as a peer tutor for Impact NW. She has served in leadership positions for Chinese Club, Filipino Club, Link Crew, Key Club, Stop the Trade, and Red Cross Club; is a mentee for the Advance Scholar Program, Minds Matter Portland, and Education Talent Search; and is a member of the Vietnamese Club, National Honor Society, and more. Yan-Tung plans to study accounting.

Phuong Thao Ly

\$2,000 sponsored by the Port of Portland
 Phuong Thao Ly, a third-year nursing student at the University of Portland, is the daughter of Tuan Quoc Ly and Nga Thi Ninh. She volunteers at the Asian Health & Service Center, translating and interpreting medical information, and Adventist Medical Center, where she assists in patient escort and transport; tutors for the America Reads program; and serves as an advisor for Health Occupations Students of America. Phuong Thao works at Holladay Park Plaza on the wait staff and at Vermont Hill Family Life Center as a substitute and assistant teacher. In addition, she is a member of the Vietnamese Student Association and Circle K International.

Vivian Duong

\$2,000 sponsored by The Asian Reporter
 Vivian Duong, a senior at Battle Ground High School (BGHS), is the daughter of Hien Duong and Amy Huynh. Vivian's activities have included volunteering for Our Lady of Lavang parish and school, the American Red Cross, and other organizations. She is active at school, serving as treasurer for Health Occupations Students of America, secretary of the Health Sciences and Careers Club and Interact Rotary, and varsity captain of the track & field team. She also participates in the Running Start program at Clark College, which will earn her an associate's degree in June. Vivian plans to major in biology at the University of Washington.

PACCO awards two scholarships

The Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) awarded two scholarships at this year's Asian Reporter Foundation Scholarship & Awards Banquet. PACCO, now in its 14th year of giving awards, issued \$500 scholarships to Maria Schaljo and Brittney Pioquinto.

High school seniors or current college students of Filipino descent who are legal residents of Oregon or southwest Washington are eligible to apply for PACCO scholarships. Awards must be utilized at an accredited two- or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school in Oregon or Washington.

To learn more, call (503) 285-1994 or visit <www.pacco.org>.



At the 2017 banquet, the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) issued two scholarships. This year's PACCO scholars are Maria Schaljo (left) and Brittney Pioquinto (right). (AR Photo/Jan Landis)

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