Advancing Justice Conference

Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Building New Foundations for Civil Rights

October 29-30, 2009 | The Center at Cathedral Plaza - Los Angeles, CA

Tom Perez, U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Promises a New Era of Enforcement at the Inaugural 2009 Advancing Justice Conference

SAVE THE DATE! 2010 Conference will be held in Washington, DC in June

Leaders of the host organizations and Tom Perez, U.S. Assistant Attorney General

During the keynote address last Friday, **U.S. Assistant Attorney General Thomas Perez** pledged to the more than 400 participants assembled at the first annual Advancing Justice Conference that the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, under his leadership, would restore civil rights enforcement, by equally upholding all of the nation's civil rights laws, and transform civil rights by ensuring that his division was responsive to the challenges facing diverse and emerging communities.

Perez spoke about the Justice Department's duty to uphold *all* of our laws, instead of a piecemeal approach to civil rights enforcement. The crowd cheered enthusiastically as he told them, "The Civil Rights Department is now open for business!" Read more about his keynote address in the Los Angeles Times.

CONFERENCE VIDEOS AND PHOTOS:

Video recordings and photos of the keynote speech and other plenaries and select workshops will be posted on www.AdvancingJustice.org in the coming weeks.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS:

Perez's speech capped off a morning session that featured a lively discussion about hate crimes prevention, a timely subject given the newly-enacted Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which expands the federal definition of a hate crime to include gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability. Other panels in the morning included a discussion by low-wage workers rights advocates organzing to overcome obstacles to fair wages, equal treatment, and safe and healthy working conditions for Asian and other immigrant workers.

Hate Crimes Prevention

Low Wage Workers' Rights

Students, activists and other leaders also spent the morning gaining a skills-based understanding of community organizing, including defining power, identifying organizing models and building an issue campaign. **Linda Trinh Võ**, chairwoman of the Asian American Studies Department at the University of California, Irvine, moderated

panelists **Sefa Aina**, director of Asian American Resource Center at Pomona College; **Sophya Chum**, program director of Khmer Girls in Action; and **Arnold Lee**, president of the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association of Southwestern Law School.

In the afternoon, **Tuyet Le**, executive director of the Asian American Institute, moderated a panel discussion about capacity building for small, community-based organizations. Such organizations face numerous challenges in good times, and even more so in difficult economic times. Board development was a main theme as panelists provided volunteer management tools to enable small organizations to grow. The panel included: **Jury Candelario**, director of the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team; **Deborah Ching**, principal of the Nonprofit Consulting Group; and **Preeti Kulkarni**, a member of the Asian Pacific Americans' for Progress board.

Capacity Building for Small Organizations

Foundation Fundraising in Tough Times

Another capacity building workshop addressed foundation fundraising. Given the severe economic downturn that has affected fundraising for nonprofits, panelists discussed national, state, and local trends in how foundations are changing their giving to meet the increased needs in the nonprofit sector. Moderated by **Stewart Kwoh**, president and executive director of the Asian Pacific Asian Legal Center, the panel included **Kafi Blumenfield**, president and chief executive officer of the Liberty Hill Foundation; **Cristina Regalado**, vice president of programs at The California Wellness Foundation; and **Cynthia Renfro**, director of programs and evaluation at the Marguerite Casey Foundation.

Civil Rights At The Intersections Of Gender Identity, Sexuality, Immigration And Race

Also in the afternoon, **Karin Wang**, vice president of programs at APALC, moderated a discussion about civil rights at the intersections of gender identity, sexuality, immigration and race. The panel explored intersections between lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) struggles and the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander civil rights agenda, with a goal of promoting greater inclusion of LGBT issues by AAPI organizations and advocates. The panel discussed parallels between the efforts to ban marriage between same-sex partners and earlier laws prohibiting interracial marriage, the similar struggles of undocumented immigrants and transgender individuals, and efforts to address immigration issues of same-sex binational couples. Panelists included **Ben De Guzman**, co-director of programs at the National Queer API Alliance; **Yongho Kim**, civic participation coordinator at the Korean Resource Center; **Hector Vargas**, deputy director of education and public affairs at Lambda Legal; **Doreena Wong**, co-founder of the Asian/Pacific Islander Queer Women/Transgender Activists; and **Shin-Ming Wong**, attorney at the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

SAVE THE DATE! 2010 ADVANCING JUSTICE CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, DC IN JUNE

Tuyet Le, Karen Narasaki, Chris Punongbayan, and Stewart Kwoh at the closing ceremony.

At the closing ceremony, **Karen K. Narasaki**, president and executive director of the Asian American Justice Center, thanked everyone for making time to participate in the Advancing Justice Conference and invited everyone to **Washington, DC, June 24 and 25**, for next year's conference. She noted, "We are coordinating with a number of AAPI organizations that will host concurrent events in the hope of creating a massive presence of AAPIs in the nation's capital."

We hope you will join us in Washington, DC for the second annual Advancing Justice Conference. Stay tuned for more information on our website. If you missed this year's Advancing Justice Conference, a recording of the keynote speech and other plenaries and select workshops will be posted on www.AdvancingJustice.org in the coming weeks.

Stay connected and get real-time updates by visiting our Facebook and Twitter.

The **2009 Advancing Justice Conference** is a joint project of:

Asian American Institute

ASIAN AMERICAN JUSTICE CENTER

Asian Law Caucus
IN DEFENSE of CIVIL RIGHTS

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEGAL CENTER OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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