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TO: Asian Pacific American (APA) Community Leadership; APA Community Media; Major Media; Corporate; Governmental, Political and Student Outreach Distribution Lists (Midwest Regional)

FROM: Irene Cualoping, Chair, Media Committee, AACC 2011 Lunar New Year Celebration

FOR: Asian American Coalition of Chicago

**ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO
ANNOUNCES CELEBRITY PRESENTERS, KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND AWARDEES FOR
28th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**

"ONE VISION, MANY VOICES"

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 26TH AT HYATT REGENCY O'HARE

IOWA SENATOR SWATI DANDEKAR NAMED KEYNOTE SPEAKER

STEVE KIM NAMED PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE

***ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER DAN RUTHERFORD NAMED GRAND ASIAN AMERICAN
SANDRA OTAKA MEMORIAL AWARDEE***

(N.B. MEDIA: FULL HOUSE EXPECTED, EARLY SET AND BATTERY PACKS ADVISED)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: GENERAL: Prem Lalvani (630) 739-7089

February 11, 2011

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CHICAGO, IL - - Final plans are underway for the Asian American Coalition of Chicago's **28th Annual Lunar New Year Celebration, "One Vision, Many Voices,"** to be held **Saturday, February 26, 2011**, at the **Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, in Rosemont, Illinois.**

Tickets are available at \$750 per table of ten or \$75 each for this popular star-studded event. More than 1,100 people are expected at the black-tie optional gala. **Reception, open microphone, exhibits and silent auction begin at 5 p.m.; opening ceremonies are at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner, entertainment, cultural entertainment and awards ceremonies until approximately 10 p.m.** Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Purchase information appears below and on the website **www.aacchicago.org**.

This year's gala Lunar Opening Ceremonies will not disappoint traditional Indian custom. Ceremonies begin with, **"A Traditional Auspicious Opening of An Event - With Diyas and Dhol Beats"**. In Indian tradition, events must begin in an auspicious manner - with energy, drum beats, vibrant colors and costumes. No celebratory occasion is complete without the lighting up of diyas. The diyas signify the importance of light or knowledge and represent a whole circle of life - an epithet of goodness, virtuosity, harmony and truth. Tabla Dhol Entertainment will provide

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Indian drumming for this year's Opening, with appearances by Nishad Parmar and Vimal Prajapati, the group's founders.

This year's cultural entertainment highlight features, ***"Unity in Diversity: From Kathak to Bollywood,"*** presented by the Asian American Coalition of Chicago 2011 Performing Artists and directed and choreographed by Gauri Jog, founder of the Indian Dance Company, a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation located in Schaumburg, Illinois. Kathak is Indian classical dance. Approximately 90 artists will participate in the show.* (*See more in "About the Show" at end.*)

Every year a different Asian community takes turn playing host of the Lunar New Year gala. This year it is the **Indian American Community**, which has thrice before (1988, 1995 and 2003) held the gavel for the Asian Pacific American community's most important event of the year.

"This is the 28th Annual Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Celebration. The Indian American Community is honored to host this Gala once again, and I am humbled to serve as Chair," said **Nadja P. Lalvani**, 2011 Chair of the 28th Annual Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Celebration.

"There are so many examples of Asian Americans who have defied the typical stereotypes and risen to the top of virtually every U.S. industry, from the arts and entertainment to fashion to business and technology," continued Lalvani. *"Our culture, family life and the unique experiences and challenges that we bring to the table continually redefines American society. This year's theme, "One Vision, Many Voices" embodies our journey leading to the next level of impact – we must come together as a community to embrace, support and lift up all Asian Americans called to public service through elected office,"* she said.

An event held on this grand of a scale only once a year, Lunar New Year is traditionally the single largest organized annual event in Chicago's Asian American community. According to the latest Census, the Asian Pacific American population in Illinois numbers approximately 428,213, or 3.4% of the statewide population.

Numerous dignitaries traditionally attend the festivities, including the Asian consular corps, elected and appointed governmental officials, political candidates, top business and corporate leaders, decision-makers at Chicago's major media press outlets, and everyone who considers himself or herself a mover and shaker in and around, or for, the Asian Pacific American national movement.

CELEBRITY PRESENTERS... The Asian American Coalition of Chicago is pleased to announce that the following people are scheduled to appear onstage as Celebrity Presenters at its 28th Annual Lunar New Year Celebration:

- * **Christina January Adachi**, President, Angel Island Theatre Company;
- * **Ravi Baichwal**, Weekend Anchor/Reporter, ABC 7 News (*pending final scheduling*);
- * **Cheryl Hamada**, Actress and Pledge Host, WTTW-TV;
- * **Judy Hsu**, Morning Anchor/Reporter, ABC 7 News;
- * **Jan Jeffcoat**, Noon Anchor/Reporter, FOX Chicago TV News;
- * **Nesita Kwan**, Anchor/Reporter, NBC 5 Chicago News;
- * **Joanie Lum**, Reporter, FOX Chicago TV News;
- * **Mai Martinez**, Weekend Anchor/Reporter, CBS 2 Chicago News (*pending final scheduling*);
- * **Mia Park**, Actress, Model, TV Personality, Musician, and Yoga Teacher;
- * **Susanna Song**, Reporter, CBS 2 Chicago News;

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* **Judy Wang**, Weekend Morning Anchor/Reporter, CLTV News; and

* **Linda Yu**, 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Anchor/Reporter, ABC 7 News, on vocal track in a special encore presentation of the video short, "***Dare to Dream: The Legacy of Ping Tom.***"

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The Coalition is pleased to announce that Iowa State Senator **Swati Dandekar** will serve as its 2011 Keynote Speaker. She last joined AACC as a State Representative at the 2003 AACC Celebration.

AWARDS

The Coalition is pleased to announce that the following people have been named this year's award recipients:

The 2011 recipient of the Coalition's prestigious Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Award - its highest award, is attorney **Steve H. Kim**. The Coalition renamed its Pan Asian Award in 1996 after the late legendary Chicago civic leader Ping Tom. Ping Tom was also one of the original founders of the Asian American Coalition. Attorney **Darryl Tom**, on behalf of The Tom Family, will again assist in this year's award ceremonies.

The 2011 recipient of the Coalition's Grand Asian American Sandra Otaka Memorial Award, is **Illinois State Treasurer Dan Rutherford**. This award is periodically presented to someone of non-Asian descent, who has made significant contributions to the Asian Pacific American community. The Coalition renamed its Grand Asian Award in 2010 after the late Cook County Circuit Court Judge Sandra Otaka.

The Coalition announces its 2011 Community Service Award recipients as follows:

1. **(Mr.) Nafees Ahmed**, Deputy Commissioner, City of Chicago Department of Aviation Finance; founder of the Job Bank, a Bangladeshi American job data bank (created in the 1990s); **Bangladeshi American Community Awardee**;
2. **(Mr.) Ernest C. Wong**, Principal, Site Design Group, award-winning landscape design firm for Chicago Chinatown's Ping Tom Memorial Park; and Chairman, Board of Directors, Chinese American Service League, **Chinese American Community Awardee**;
3. **(Ms.) Cecilia Buenafior**, Entrepreneur; Founder/Owner, Life Home Health Care, Inc., named one of the Top 500 Home Health Care Agencies in the USA by "Home Care Elite" magazine; **Filipino American Community Awardee**;
4. **(Mr.) Zul Kapadia**, Sophomore, Northwestern University; Volunteer, Chicago Partnership Walk and Cub Scouts; **Indian American Community Awardee**;
5. **Dr. Hondojo Tjondro Kusumo**, Research Scientist, Neurobiology of Alcoholism at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Member, Board of Directors, Indonesian American Community of Illinois; **Indonesian American Community Awardee**;

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6. **(Mr.) Shigeo Ito**, Horticulturalist; Creator/Caretaker, Japanese Garden at Heiwa Terrace senior citizens residential facility; Volunteer/Member, Midwest Bonsai Society; Volunteer/Consultant to the Chicago Botanic Garden; **Japanese American Community Awardee**;
7. **(Ms.) Celine Thum**, Medical Student, Model and Musician; Vice President, Malaysian Club of Chicago; **Malaysian American Community Awardee**;
8. **(Ms.) Sahar Ali Dar**, Attorney and Non-Profit Consultant, President-Elect, Pakistani American Bar Association; Director, Apna Ghar (Domestic Violence Agency)- Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Family Law Clinic; **Pakistani American Community Awardee**;
9. **(Ms.) Busra Thepjatri**, Director, Thai Classical Dance School of the Thai Buddhist Temple in Chicago, Illinois; President, Thai Illinois Project, **Thai American Community Awardee**; and
10. **(Dr.) Jackie Conley**, Vice President of Marketing, Citrine Home Health Care, Inc., Skokie, Illinois; President, Vietnamese American Community of Illinois, **Vietnamese American Community Awardee**.

The Coalition announces its 2011 Youth Who Excels Award recipients as follows:

1. **(Ms.) Serena M. Taj**, 16, Junior, James B. Conant High School, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, **Bangladeshi American Community Awardee**;
2. **(Mr.) Harlan Cao**, 17, Senior, Lane Tech College Prep High School, Chicago, Illinois, **Chinese American Community Awardee**;
3. **(Mr.) Alexander Alberto**, 20, Senior, DeVry University, Chicago, Illinois, **Filipino American Community Awardee**;
4. **(Ms.) Aisha Wadhwani**, 17, Senior, Downers Grove South High School, Downers Grove, Illinois, **Indian American Community Awardee**;
5. **(Ms.) Golda Rubina**, 22, Candidate for Master's Degree, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, **Indonesian American Community Awardee**;
6. **(Mr.) Jason Yum**, (*information pending as of presstime*), **Korean American Community Awardee**;
7. **(Mr.) Maxter Thai**, 19, Freshman, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, **Malaysian American Community Awardee**;
8. **(Ms.) Zahra Fatima Lalani**, 17, Senior, Adlai E. Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, Illinois, **Pakistani American Community Awardee**;
9. **(Ms.) Sicha Chantaprasopsuk**, 18, Freshman, University of Illinois at Chicago - UIC, Chicago, Illinois, **Thai American Community Awardee**;
10. **(Mr.) Anthony Mai**, 16, Junior, Lake View High School, Chicago, Illinois, **Vietnamese American Community Awardee**.

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SPONSORS

Top sponsors this year include: Pan Asian Sponsors: **American Family Insurance** and **CNA Foundation**; Community Sponsor: **I-55 Greater Chicago Truck Stop, Bolingbrook**; Coalition Sponsor Plus: **Granite Innovation, Inc.** and Coalition Sponsor: **R.M. Chin & Associates, Inc.**

TICKETS

For ticket reservations, please contact **M. Bhaskaran** at **m_bhaskaran@hotmail.com** or **(630) 217-6190**. Advance purchase is required. Tickets are \$750 per table of ten or \$75 each. They are being distributed through community outlets as well as directly from the Coalition. They are **first funded, first seated**.

CHECKS

All checks should be made payable to **AACC 2011**.

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorship rates and packages are priced as follows: \$10,000 Global Sponsor; \$5,000 Pan-Asian Sponsor; \$3,000 Community Sponsor and \$1,500 Coalition Sponsor. **To inquire about or to reserve sponsorships, please contact aacc2011@aacchicago.org .**

ADVERTISEMENTS

In addition, advertisement space reservations in the Souvenir Program Book are available at \$525 for a full page (size 8-1/2" x 11") and \$325 for a half-page (8-1/2" x 5-1/2"). Non-profit full-page ads (8-1/2" x 11") are available at a discounted rate of \$325. Checks, insertion orders, and camera-ready black and white artwork creative for 2011 ads are due **February 15, 2011**. **Ads must be funded by the deadline in order to run.**

AACC... WHO WE ARE

According to the latest Census, the Asian Pacific American population in Illinois numbers approximately 428,213, or 3.4% of the statewide population. Approximately 71,469 Asian Pacific Americans reside in DuPage County, comprising 7.9% of DuPage County's population, with the bulk of the other 262,731 residents of Cook County, comprising 4.8% of Cook County's population. The 2000 Census shows that Asian Pacific Americans reside in Chicago in communities including West Rogers Park, Albany Park, Uptown, Armour Square and Bridgeport, and in suburban Cook County in communities including Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates and Skokie.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sponsor, ad and general inquiries should be directed to aacc2011@aacchicago.org (e-mail preferred).

MEDIA

ENERI Communications again has been named the agency of record for this year's Lunar New Year Celebration, and has received the assignment to coordinate media relations, TV

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station/media company participation, celebrity presenters and press credentials. All media requests may be directed to ENERI Communications at info@enericom.net or (312) 635-0888.

Media wishing to cover from the press platform that evening must be credentialed and requests are due by **Monday, February 21, 2011 COB**. Media wishing to sit at dinner tables should pre-arrange purchase of dinner tickets through the assistance of community organizations.

*** ABOUT THE SHOW** (*Based on information provided as of presstime*)

Music and drums are the focal point of many South Asian celebrations. **Tabla Dhol Entertainment** originally started as a forum purely for drummers and musicians to get together to share their passions for music. From world percussion to music production and mixing, its founding members came together to share in what they love: Rhythm! Guests will enjoy the rhythmic vibrations of the Dhol Drum, played by the group's founding members, **Nishad Parmar** and **Vimal Prajapati**.

In the Kathak, an Indian classical dance, the importance of the three colors of the Indian national flag will be celebrated. This tricolor, or tiranga, features the color saffron, which symbolizes courage; the color white, which symbolizes peace and honesty; and the color green, which symbolizes hope, joy and fertility. Costumes for this evening's debut of this dance were designed by Gauri Jog, tailored in India especially for this event, and then shipped to the Chicago area. A combination of musical styles – classical to liquid dance, will showcase nine performers – three garbed in each of the colors.

The show will feature an unusual segment for this type of evening – a Yoga segment, “Aasan,” which means “different postures”. Yoga is the fitness of body and soul. Yoga dance is inspired by sadhus and rishis on the banks of the Ganga. This segment will feature 10-15 different poses, with the youngest performer age 7.

The show will also feature a “Bhangra” dance number by five members of a team who attend the the University of Chicago, led by **Kate Levinstein**.

In the “**Unity in Diversity**” fusion presentation, 25 teenagers will be showcased in a number featuring Korean Tai Kwon Do, (led by **Master Seok Bong Kim**, S.B. Kim's Martial Arts Academy), and dances by members of the Indian, Filipino, Thai and Vietnamese communities, all interpreting the same song. “Unity in Diversity” is based on the premise that no matter how different our cultures are, music and rhythm binds us together. Choreographers for the fusion number are: **Isha Jog** from Indian Dance Company; **Jane Quiaoit-Miran**, Founder/Choreographer, Sulyap Pilipino Cultural Dance Company; **Vallapa Kongsri** from the Thai American Association of Illinois and **Landy Nguyen** from Nghia Sinh International, Inc.

In the “**Jai Ho**” number, 17 community delegates dressed in native costumes, not necessarily dancers, will join seven members of the Indian Dance School, a not-for-profit organization, who will help lead the number, for an upbeat number that the Director **Gauri Jog** wanted to do “for fun.”

Masala T and **Alisha** will also appear. They star in the television show called HOTCHAAT, a variety show by Lotus Production Group seen in 33 countries worldwide, and also seen online at www.hotchaat.com. Masala T and Alisha say they are the first to bring the worlds of Bollywood and Hollywood together in a variety talk show format covering comedy, fashion, movies, fun and social networks.

Anita Chugh is serving as 2011 AACC Cultural Program Committee Chair.

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**2011 ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO
28th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**

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FOR: 2011 Asian American Coalition of Chicago Planning Committee

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