



## September 2012 eNews

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### Karen Students Overcome Challenges as Refugees to Achieve Dream of Higher Education

One of the newly emerging Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in the United States is the Karen (pronounced Kah-Ren) population. The Karen community fled Burma, also known as Myanmar, due to political oppression with many heading to refugee camps in Thailand and eventually immigrating to the United States. Many Karen refugees have settled in Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

As this population grows, APIASF has seen an increase in applicants as well as scholarship recipients. One such student is Poe Dee, a 2012 - 2013 APIASF / Coca-Cola Foundation Scholar, from Lincoln, Nebraska. Dee is pursuing a degree in Political Science at Wayne State College and hopes to pursue a career in law.



"I have seen Karen people suffer under the dictatorship in Burma, and now in America they face new challenges because they do not have the life skills or legal knowledge expected of American citizens," said Dee. "I will try to explore the laws of the land and work hard until I become a quality lawyer so I can continue to help the Karen community reach their fullest potential in the United States."

Dee has already made a tremendous impact in his community by developing a network for the Karen community in his area. He schedules doctor's appointments, serves as an interpreter and helps address other needs of refugee families.

"Volunteer work has given me the opportunity to serve as a leader and has ultimately influenced my goals," said Dee. "By earning a high school diploma, a college degree and graduating from law school, I will serve as a role model for future Karen academics and the larger community."

### MSNBC Anchor Fights the Perception Gap

On first-glance, MSNBC Anchor Richard Lui seems to fit the perception that many people have about the AAPI community. In a recent article for the *Huffington Post*, he shares his struggle to

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#### Scholar Profile



*"As an Asian American student from a family of refugees from both Thailand and Vietnam, I feel so honored and grateful that I have been selected. My family is considered extremely low-income, and thanks to this scholarship I can afford my dreams of going to college."*

**Julie Khanh Pham**  
2012 - 2013 APIASF /  
Thai Alliance in  
America Scholar

Attending University of  
Portland

graduate high school and the important role that community college played in helping him obtain a college degree.

In the article, Lui shares important data about the AAPI community, including information from the 2011 Report from the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) that shows more than 60 percent of certain AAPI groups have not attended college.

To read the article, [click here](#). To download a copy of the 2011 CARE Report, [click here](#).

## APIASF Seeks Volunteer Readers for GMS Scholarship Applications

The Gates Millennium Scholars Program is seeking Readers for the 2013 GMS Read to be held in Washington, D.C. from February 17-22, 2013. The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in all discipline areas, and graduate fellowships for those students pursuing studies in mathematics, science, computer science, engineering, education, library science or public health.

Readers are individuals committed to educational access and are able to participate in a rigorous process of online review and assessment of Gates Millennium Scholarship Nominees. Selected Readers will be asked to participate in a cultural orientation, serve as a resource and share their knowledge of Asian American and Pacific Islander cultures, education, leadership and community service throughout the evaluation week.

Please [click here](#) for a copy of the application. Submit the completed form to Ms. Nicole Alonzo via email to [nalonzo@apiasf.org](mailto:nalonzo@apiasf.org) or fax to 202-530-0643 no later than **November 15, 2012**. Applicants are also required to submit their résumé/curriculum vitae with the application. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Joo Young Lee at [jylee@apiasf.org](mailto:jylee@apiasf.org) or 202-715-0791.

## Regional Scholar Networks Host Local Gatherings for Students in Boston, Philadelphia & New York

The **APIASF Regional Scholars Networks** located in **Boston, Philadelphia, and New York City** will be hosting their first gathering of the year in September and October as a meet and greet for local-area Scholars. In addition to these cities, APIASF is excited to announce its venture piloting elements of the RSN program in **Seattle** this year as well.

Each year, a group of Scholars, recognized as the Regional Representatives (Reps), assist in planning and leading various Scholar community building events and activities (e.g., scholarship outreach, professional development event) throughout the year. The Scholar reps for the 2012-2013 year include - **Boston RSN**

## Majoring in Biology

### Save the Date

Please save the date for the seventh annual **APIASF *Today's Minds, Tomorrow's Future* November 8, 2012** Scholarship Benefit in New York City. The event will be held at the Hilton New York.

For more information or to learn more about sponsoring the 2012 Scholarship Benefit, please contact Katrina Chambers at [kchambers@apiasf.org](mailto:kchambers@apiasf.org).

### Give the Gift of Education

Did you know that you can make a difference for a deserving Asian American or Pacific Islander student? One gift to APIASF can support a student in achieving their dream of higher education.

[Click here](#) to make a difference in the life of a student.

## APIASF Programs

**APIASF is a lot more than scholarships!**

APIASF provides scholarship recipients with individual advising, community building and professional development opportunities. [Click here](#) to learn more about our programs and services.

### Quick Links

**Reps:** Sadia Arshad, Alexis Knaub, Lyndon Thai, Claire Wan, Kathy Wang; **NYC RSN Reps:** Rakhi Agrawal, LinKai Jiang, Grace Kim, Michelle Lam, Sunny Ng, Annie Yang, Dian Yu; **Philadelphia RSN Reps:** Umar Hafeez, Rebecca Yee; and **Seattle RSN Rep:** Andy Tang. This year the 15 RSN reps will work with APIASF staff to build and strengthen the network of Scholars in these locations.

If you are a Scholar looking to get involved in the existing RSNs, please contact APIASF at [programs@apiasf.org](mailto:programs@apiasf.org).

## APIASF Blog Helps Students with Best Practices for Applications

For October, APIASF's blog, *re/present: live. learn. lead.*, will focus on **seeking opportunities and highlighting best practices in applying for them (#repOpportunity)**, whether



they be scholarships, fellowships, undergraduate or graduate degree programs, jobs or others. We will have prompts posted throughout the month to guide the conversation, but especially encourage our Scholars to share their perspective and lived experiences.

We also invite community members and professionals committed to highlighting the voices, visibility and unique experiences of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community to join the dialogue and share insights on this particular topic with our Scholars. **By the end of the month, we hope Scholars and our other readers will feel equipped to prepare a strong application for whatever opportunity they are seeking.**

You can join and follow the conversation at <http://apiasfrepresent.tumblr.com>.

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