

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 6, 2011

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MAY: CELEBRATING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH & MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Denver, CO – May recognizes both Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. In honor of this double celebration, the National Asian American Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA) and the Asian Pacific Islanders with Disabilities of California (APIDC) are proud to host the first annual “*Laughter is the Best Medicine*” event on May 21st 7 pm – 10 pm at George Washington University Betts Auditorium in Washington, DC.

Laughter is the Best Medicine will bring together people who are passionate about improving the quality of life for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The event will be an evening of fun and laughter to help ease our pain, and a celebration of life as Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders (APIs) experiencing mental health problems, physical disabilities or both.

Joining us to share their stories will be a number of APIs from throughout the country who will be participating on May 21st. *A free forum will be held preceding the evening event from 3 pm - 4:30 pm with APIs with disabilities sharing their stories. Event to be held at the Betts Auditorium, Room 402, 800 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC.* Over the next few weeks, we will be sharing their personal stories. Their participation is being sponsored by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

We want to highlight this week:

Kinike Bermudez is a wife, mother, grandmother, teacher, trainer, tax payer, mental health advocate, and an active member of her community. She lives with diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, bipolar disorder and post traumatic stress disorder as a survivor of childhood incest and teen age rape. She has long been an inspiration to others as she shares her story of losing her children, then winning them back, of knowing what it is like to be homeless but eventually getting the help she needed to turn things around and become a nationally recognized advocate for mental health within the Asian American community.

Jean Lin is a Chinese American woman who lives with cerebral palsy. Hers is a story of strength, of someone who has first-hand experience confronting the many barriers that people with disabilities face in everyday life, whether it is navigating through the maze of services or finding appropriate transportation. She is continually faced with people who may have difficulty understanding her words and will not acknowledge that she clearly has much to say. Her experience has taught her that it is vitally important for service providers to maintain consistently high quality care in order to foster trust in those who have become mistrustful and have fallen through the cracks. It is her firm belief that providers need to not only respect different cultures, but at the same time promote diversity awareness which will in turn promote increased knowledge regarding disability issue acceptance in all cultures.

For more information, please go to www.naapimha.org

For more information about the Laughter is the Best Medicine event, please contact JR Kuo at jrkuo2010@naapimha.org or cell: (626) 848-4189

For Laughter is the Best Medicine Tickets please go to www.ticketmaster.com

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About NAAPIMHA:

The mission of NAAPIMHA is to improve the mental health of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders living in this country. NAAPIMHA has been a leading advocate on mental health and continues to work closely with community based organizations, researchers, service providers, and policy makers at the local, state and national levels. For information about NAAPIMHA, please contact D.J. Ida at djida@naapimha.org.

- Office Number: (303)298-7910
- Website: www.naapimha.org

About APIDC:

The mission of APIDC is to give a voice and a face to Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders with physical and mental disabilities. Our goals are to help break down the service and cultural barriers faced by APIs with disabilities; to provide APIs with disabilities and their families with knowledge; to create a community network for empowerment and independence. We offer an information clearinghouse; leadership development; data collection and analysis; and policy development and advocacy. For information about APIDC, please contact Daphne Kwok at dkwok@apidisabilities.org

- Office Number: (510)459-4228
- Website: <http://www.apidisabilities.org>

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