



# Connections

Asian American  
and Native Hawaiian  
Pacific Islander  
Heritage Month  
May 2021



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Office of Policy, Management and Budget  
Administrative Services and the  
Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights





# Message from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administrative Services



May 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I am so pleased to present to you the one-year anniversary issue of **Connections** Magazine.

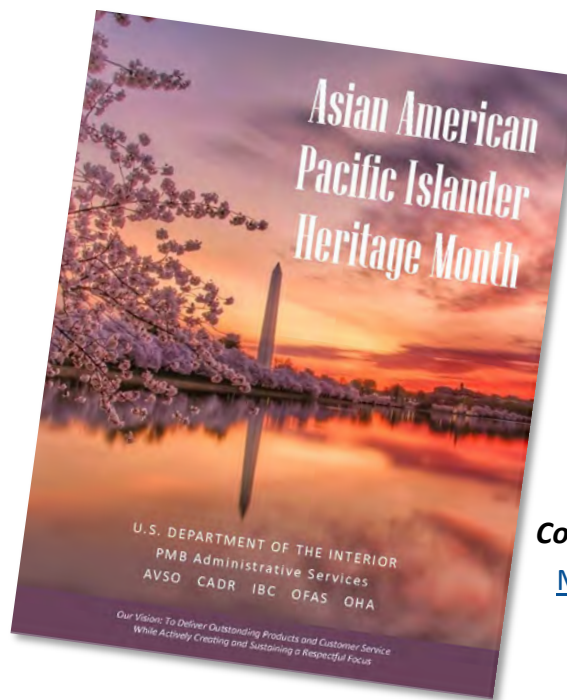
In May of 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and requirements for most of us to work from home, we launched **Connections** as a way to keep our [Special Emphasis Program](#) initiatives going when opportunities for in-person meetings and other get-togethers were unavailable. Since then, we have expanded our collaborative approach to include as our partner **Erica White-Dunston**, Director of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights (ODICR), as well as team members from across the Department.

I am truly grateful to all those who enthusiastically stepped up to support the Team's efforts, whether serving on the steering committee/production team or providing content for specific issues. It is through this collaborative approach that we all can ensure everyone feels included, respected, acknowledged and appreciated. Thank you for your outstanding work!

**HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:** an important message from **Secretary Deb Haaland** (page 4), an insightful discussion of this year's theme *Advancing Leaders Through Purpose-Driven Service* by **Julie Bednar** (page 8), a beautiful memory of middle school years in Okinawa by **Barbara Green** (page 10) and a remarkable storybook featuring just a few of our Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander colleagues from throughout the Department (beginning on page 18). Enjoy!

As always, please be well and stay safe.

*Jacqueline M. Jones*



Our first issue of **Connections:** [May 2020](#)

**Connections** magazine is produced each month by a collaborative, multiagency team of volunteer employees from throughout DOI. Under the direction of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administrative Services [Jacqueline M. Jones](#) and Director of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights [Erica White-Dunston, Esq.](#), who serves as the Chief Diversity

Officer for the Department, the **Connections** team strives to foster an environment where all employees are respected, valued, accepted, appreciated and feel included.

To find out more or to submit your ideas and suggestions for future issues, please contact editor Steve Carlisle at [stephen\\_carlisle@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:stephen_carlisle@ibc.doi.gov). Your input is very welcome!



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*Above: Art by Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya. Read about Amanda's NYC Anti-Racism Art Project beginning on page 42.*



## Message from the Secretary of the Interior

Dear Colleagues,

As we commemorate Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we celebrate the incredible contributions that the AANHPI community has made to the Department of the Interior and to the country as a whole. This year's theme, ***Advancing Leaders Through Purpose-Driven Service***, speaks to the values we hold at Interior and to our responsibility to lift up every community through our work.

We have a responsibility to center the voices of the AANHPI community in the work that we do, the policies we implement, and the legacies we leave as we tell the story of America through our conservation and preservation efforts.

Over the past several weeks, I have had the privilege of speaking with many of our AANHPI employees. We've discussed the importance of taking care of each other, and the hope that we have for a brighter future. At the Department, we're committed to ensuring everyone feels safe and has opportunities to grow and learn.

The resources below are important to how we support the AANHPI community and center equity



and inclusion in our daily work at Interior. Please take the time to review them and don't be afraid to seek out answers to any questions you may have to aid in your learning.

Together, we can work to create a more supportive community for every member of our team.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Haaland".

Secretary of the Interior

### ***Resources courtesy Lee Mun Wah, CEO, Stir Fry Seminars and Consulting***

#### **TOPIC: EXPLORING THE ROOTS OF OUR DISCONNECTIONS**

[21 Ways to Stop a Conversation About Diversity](#)  
[Unhealthy Ways of Communicating](#)  
[How We Have Failed Our White Students \(Part One & Two\)](#)  
[How We Have Failed Our Students of Color \(Part Three\)](#)  
[The Privilege of Numbness](#)

#### **TOPIC: WAYS TO RECONNECT & REBUILD TRUST**

[The Art of Mindful Inquiry/9 Healthy Ways to Communicate](#)  
[The Art of Listening](#)  
[In Search of a Real Apology](#)  
[How to Have a Successful Town Hall Meeting \(Part One & Two\)](#)

#### **TOPIC: MINDFUL TECHNIQUES THAT CREATE COMMUNITY**

[10 Ways to Begin a Diversity Conversation in the Classroom](#)  
[9 Ways to Begin a Diversity Conversation with Teachers and Staff](#)  
[Becoming Culturally Competent is a Journey](#)  
[Advanced Mindful Interventions & Quiz](#)  
[Advanced Empathetic Responses & Quiz](#)  
[Mindful Facilitation Practice](#)  
[Mindful Facilitation Worksheet: Advanced Level Vignette #4](#)  
[Mindful Facilitation Worksheet: Advanced Level Vignette #7](#)  
[My Child Will Not Be Taught by a White Teacher! \(Group Discussion Questions\)](#)



Remember, Interior's Employee Assistance Program provider, **Espyr**, is here for employees and their dependents. **Espyr** provides confidential counseling and consultation at no cost via telephone or other

virtual means. A live counselor is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 800-869-0276 or visit [espyr.com](https://espyr.com) (Password: InteriorEAP).

### Introduction to Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage



*Courtesy of National Park Service*

The history of North America is shaped by the stories of immigrants from Asia and the Pacific and the native people of the Pacific Islands. While some of the earliest to arrive were from China, Japan, India, and Korea, immigration reforms tied to U.S. civil rights legislation brought even more groups to the United States—such as Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Indonesians, the Hmong and other peoples from South and Central Asia.

During the 1800s, the discovery of gold in California and political upheaval in China triggered unprecedented waves of people from Asian countries to the United States. Asians contributed significantly to the history of American nation-building and westward expansion.

Initially welcomed as a much needed labor source in mining, railroad, and agriculture, Asians soon became a source of resentment for those Americans who thought of themselves as white. They began to blame Asians for the economic decline and high unemployment after the Civil War. The U.S. government passed a series of measures to stem the influx of immigrants. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 severely restricted immigration by barring Chinese laborers from entering the country for ten years and made Chinese immigrants already within the United States ineligible for U.S. citizenship. In 1907, a “Gentleman’s Agreement” between the United States and Japan also limited the immigration of Japanese laborers.

In the wake of exclusionary immigration policies and racial discrimination, early Asian immigrants nevertheless successfully built ethnic enclaves throughout the United States. In the

Sacramento delta, the small settlements of Locke and Walnut Grove were once thriving *nihonmachi*’s (Japan towns) and Chinatowns that were the homes of immigrants who flocked to California during the Gold Rush. The Stedman-Thomas Historic District of Ketchikan, Alaska was home to a diverse community of Japanese, Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos who helped build the region’s fishing industry.

By the mid-1900s, generations of Asian Americans had built enduring communities throughout the United States. However, Japan’s attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in 1941 revived existing hostility towards Japanese Americans. In response to public outcry against the attack and widespread fear of Japanese American disloyalty, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which forcibly relocated over 120,000 Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast to one of ten Relocation Centers. The Minidoka National Historic Site is one of the places that interprets this largest forced relocation of American citizens.



Despite the denial of their civil liberties and constitutional rights, many Japanese Americans still felt it was their duty to contribute to the war effort. Initially barred from enlisting following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the armed forces later formed a segregated unit for Japanese Americans: The 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team. They fought on the battlefields of Italy, Germany, and southern France while most of their families remained in internment camps for the duration of the war. The 442nd would go on to become the most decorated unit of its size in American military history.

*Pictured, left: Japanese women in a WWII internment camp. Above: Asian military personnel in WWII. Photos NPS.*







## Lena Chang and Kelly Kim



The **Connections** Team congratulates **Lena Chang** and **Kelly Kim**, who were honored with the 2021 Diversity Excellence Award by The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), the premier organization representing Asian American and Pacific Islander employees in the Federal government. Lena and Kelly were recognized for their **“Remarkable contributions towards diversity and inclusion through collaboration against all odds.”** Because of their outstanding efforts, the Connections Team is honored to present Lena and Kelly with our Vanguard Award for May 2021. Congratulations!

*The Vanguard Award is presented by the Connections Team each month to recognize and celebrate the achievements of DOI employees who champion diversity, equity and inclusion. Would you like to nominate an individual or team for next month’s Vanguard Award? Please send your nomination to Connections editor Stephen Carlisle at [stephen\\_carlisle@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:stephen_carlisle@ibc.doi.gov). Thank you!*



## Advancing Leaders through Purpose-Driven Service

By Julie Bednar, Associate Director, IBC HRD

*Julie Bednar is the Associate Director for the IBC's Human Resources Directorate (HRD). IBC HRD provides over 20 different HR systems and services to over 100 client agencies across the federal government. DOI uses many of these systems and services, including the Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS), QuickTime and DOI Talent. Ms. Bednar has been a federal civil servant for almost 30 years, 20 of which have been with DOI.*

I come from a mixed-race background. My mother was from Thailand and my Caucasian father was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. Both of my parents were hardworking, focused on education and dedicated to my sister and me.

My mother was particularly scrappy. As a university student in Thailand, she earned a scholarship to attend Georgetown University. She had learned English in Thailand, so she left her home of 20+ years and came to Washington, DC all on her own. She left her family of 13 siblings to start a new life. She met my father at Georgetown, and they married. At the time they were married, it was not legal for mixed race couples to be married in Virginia, but fortunately the District of Columbia was more progressive. My parents eventually moved to Denver, Colorado, and this is where I grew up. My mother was far away from her family and had very little for a support system. But nonetheless, along with my father, my mother poured her heart into making sure my sister and I had a wonderful childhood.

Growing up post-Vietnam War as a mixed Asian/Caucasian child, I experienced my share of discriminatory actions. When I was in 1st or 2nd grade, I remember being followed around the playground by a boy who was older than me, and he would call me names - derogatory terms for Asian people. I did not know this boy, plus I didn't even understand the derogatory terms that he was using; I barely looked up at him to see his face because of how he made me feel. After a couple times of this happening, I told my parents, and my father gave me some advice. My father was an experienced and well-respected teacher, and he knew how to reach kids. My dad told me to stand up to this boy, and to not let him continue to call me names. My father said I had the power to make it stop. From that point forward, I remember incidences throughout



my childhood where I was bullied, and I stood up to those kids. I fought back. Those children stopped bullying me.

Of course, as a child, constantly being called names, teased, and bullied for "just being me" took a toll on my self-confidence at a young age. Even though the individual situations stopped, there was always a new challenge waiting around the corner. It took a lot of work and different tactics, but I figured out how to manage those situations. A couple times, the situations devolved to physical scuffles, but most of the time, all it took was a few choice words to make the other child stop and think of their actions.

Also, throughout my childhood, I witnessed people make disparaging comments to my mother for being Asian and to my father for being part of a mixed-race couple. Both of my parents were strong and confident in speaking up against such people in the moment. Although I did not like seeing my parents verbally attacked by those people, I was always proud of both my parents for sticking up for themselves and sticking together as a couple. They were inseparable. And their actions gave me continued confidence to stick up for myself. [cont'd]



Fast forward to my career in Federal service. As of July 2021, I will have 30 years as a loyal federal civil servant. I'm very fortunate that the federal service provides numerous protections for employees against discrimination and hostile work environments. And I must say - the federal workforce has been exceptionally welcoming to me as an individual. Sure, I have run into a colleague now and then with whom I didn't see eye to eye, but overall, I believe that I have not experienced discrimination as a federal employee. I know that I am more fortunate than some individuals in the federal workforce; and therefore, we need evolving federal laws and regulations to stop discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for everyone in the federal workforce.

Early in my career, I learned how to stand up for myself as a professional. Of course, the strategies were different than what I developed as a child, but the underlying approach was the same - stick up for yourself and speak up. In my early career, if someone made an untrue or unfair comment about me or my work, I approached the situation head-on. In retrospect, there were some situations where I could have been more diplomatic in my reaction, and I like to think that I have learned from those past experiences and become more effective in how I handle such situations.

As I advanced in my career, but not yet a supervisor, I learned to listen to my colleagues around me and become a champion, coach, or mentor for newer team members. I tended to gravitate to people who seemed alone or who needed help - everyone needs a friend at work. I think my tendency originated from my childhood of feeling alone or "different" a lot of the time. Through these friendships that I developed

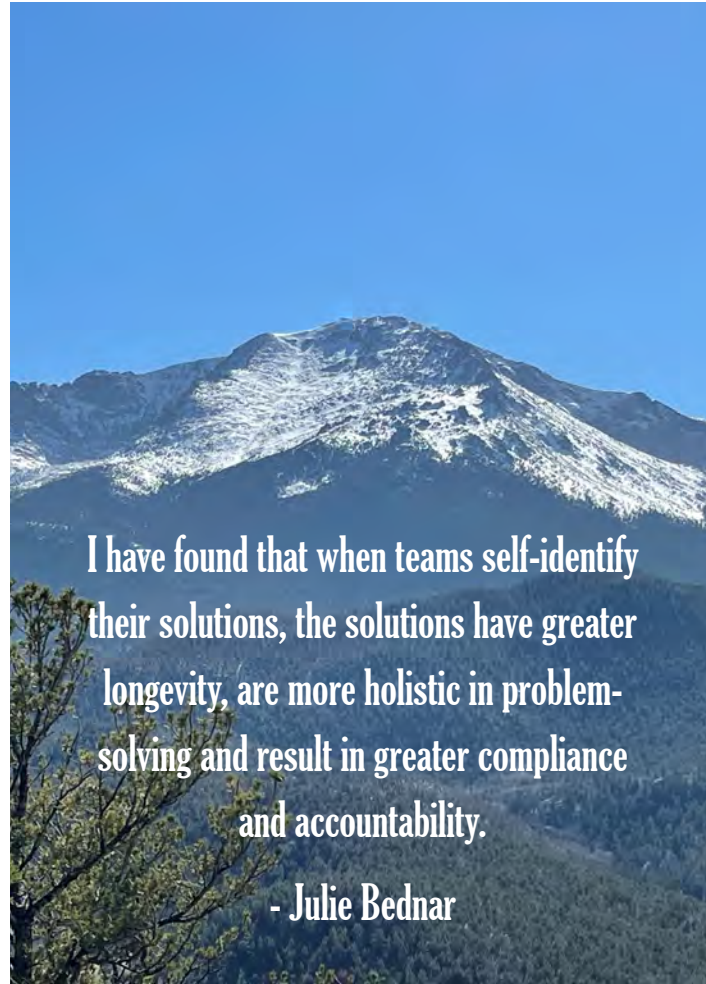
with my coworkers, I met kind, intelligent, thoughtful people. I trained numerous colleagues around me, many of whom have gone on to be promoted and some who have already retired. I like to think that I helped their professional journey be more positive and productive.

Over the past 13 years or so, I have been a supervisor and a manager, and I consistently keep in mind that not everyone feels confident, comfortable, or empowered to speak up for themselves. I attempt to create a positive work environment where all team members around me can be free to express themselves as individuals and build strong teams with their colleagues. I encourage my team members to talk through their challenges and devise their own solutions. I facilitate those conversations by listening to ideas, asking questions, steering any comments away from blame, inquiring with team members who have not spoken up and capturing action items for follow through. Coming to resolutions through these facilitated discussions can take more time and effort than a quick directive; however, it is time and effort well spent. I have found that

when teams self-identify their solutions, the solutions have greater longevity, are more holistic in problem-solving and result in greater compliance and accountability.

The HRD team consists of hardworking, experienced, knowledgeable people who want to do the right thing by DOI and all our client employees. This team has the answers to any challenge that arises. I see my leadership purpose as building and maintaining a workplace where each team member can contribute positively towards solutions that enable IBC to be an exceptional service provider.

This is my leadership path to purpose-driven service.



# Odyssey in Okinawa

**By Barbara Green, Equal Opportunity Manager,  
NPS Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage, AK**

“Get me back on the plane right now!” That was my internal reaction shrieking at what I saw when my father led us into the house he rented off base in Okinawa, before we were able to move into military housing. I glanced at the ceiling and there were geckos clinging to geckos - more than one. It was a tropical lizard playland.

This was the second time my father was stationed in Okinawa and I sure didn't recall seeing that many geckos before. And let's not forget the dead habu skins wrapped around the concrete fence. Habus are venomous snakes and the thought of those vipers shedding their skins near our home was incredibly creepy.

My next thought was, “We are living in the jungle and I am not sure I can survive this.” You haven't lived until you wake up in the morning and see a gecko on your chest, peering at you, or shake one out of a towel after you take a shower, or watch them lose their tail when they feel stressed out. A tail flying down from the ceiling is quite the spectacle. And snails as huge as oranges washed up on the road after an abundant rain shower.

Although I found this a bit daunting, I grew to love our time in Okinawa. What a charming island it was, a prefecture of Japan and part of the Ryukyu Islands. I learned my mother was blessed with artistic talent, and I cultivated my passion for the

written word. I considered those years my own version of an odyssey, and an invaluable lesson in learning more about myself and my beloved mother.

It was the '70s: bell bottom pants, frayed jeans, peasant blouses and tie dye shirts were the rage. Add a headband, scarf or choker and slide into a pair of Birkenstocks or

boots and you became a fashion icon. We listened to the Eagles, the Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, the Stylistics, Earth Wind and Fire, Van Halen, Sly and the Family Stone, and Fleetwood Mac, to name a few, and I wanted to be Stevie Nicks.

We couldn't add an iTunes song to our nonexistent cell phones, so we were relegated to taping songs from the radio using a cassette tape recorder. Timing the recording to precisely end the song without the deejay speaking required a great deal of finesse. I spent considerable time on the weekends hiding underneath my bed to try and block out any noise while I made my mixed tapes. Those were the good ol' days, my friend.

*[cont'd]*





I attended Pacific Middle School, 6th through 8th grade, and our classrooms were Quonset huts – old World War II buildings which resembled half of a can. It was challenging venturing to each classroom during typhoon season, when the wind was so strong, you needed to firmly clutch your books to your chest, and the rain was so heavy, you were already drenched by the time you went from one classroom to the next.

The heat was stifling when it was hot and humid outside, with our only relief to fling open the classroom doors to feel the cool ocean breeze wafting in. Our school was located across the street from the beach and we spent time exploring it as part of our science class curriculum – truly an ideal setting for learning. Okinawa is 66 miles long and less than 10 miles wide and the beaches were simply spectacular.

We relied on significant rainfalls for our water supply, and whenever there was a dry spell, we were subjected to mandatory water rationing, which entailed completely shutting off the water for 24 hours to conserve a limited supply of it. I remember filling up the bathtub and quite a few buckets with water to ensure we had enough to use the next day. Despite this inconvenience, I focused more on what I loved about the island. The kindness and graciousness the local community extended to us, the close proximity to the beach, and the support and encouragement of teachers who mentored me.

I excelled in language arts and political science and my teachers encouraged me to pursue writing. One of my teachers asked me to be the front-page editor of the school newspaper, the *Quonset Hut Quotes*. I thrived and flourished under their tutelage and still immensely enjoy writing. Without their encouragement and support, I may not have found my voice – my niche for expressing myself through writing.

As an introvert, I was a loner and kept to myself and often captured my thoughts in a diary, never imagining one day my teachers would believe I wrote well enough to write articles and edit a school newspaper. In sixth grade, I was a nebbish nerd immersing myself in my studies and voluminous books, enjoying school more than I did socializing. By eighth grade, I became a noticeable nerd. Writing and editing for the newspaper expanded my horizons and I blossomed into a sassy socializer, yet still a nerd, which I proudly owned and still claim to this day.

We lived at Onishi Terrace for less than a year before we moved into military housing. I was excited since I had my own bedroom and did not have to share with my squabbling sisters and my brother. Being the oldest has some benefits. And the quarters were big; we had two screened porches with a massive yard. Even better, the Hello Kitty store was across the street. I will admit to being a devoted fan and my room resembled a Hello Kitty shrine.

[cont'd]



**Above:** Pacific Middle School.

**Left:** Barbara Green in grade school.

**Below:** vintage Hello Kitty clock.

**Pictures courtesy of the author.**





*Examples of Barbara's Mother's artistic skills.  
Top: Ornate origami tree. Bottom: dough  
flower arrangement.*

*Pictures courtesy of the author.*

I also indulged in many delicious goodies I still enjoy and am fortunate enough to buy at our local Asian markets. Senbei (rice crackers), Morinaga candy, ranging from fruity Hi-Chews to milk caramel and chocoballs, along with Botan rice candy, containing a toy surprise or stickers in each box. These tasty treats were irresistible. Add some mochi, a delectable rice cake, and I'm in a sumptuous smorgasbord heaven.

Although my father was in the Army, we lived in Marine base housing located near Marine Air Corps Station Futenma. We lived near a swimming pool – a very popular pre-teen and teen hangout – and I remember learning how to swim at the base pool, along with it being warm enough to swim in October. The swimming lessons were enjoyable and I took my swimming test when a typhoon was imminent.

Since the typhoon wasn't too close to the island and the wind gusts weren't dangerously cyclonic, our instructor decided to proceed with testing the students. It was raining and a tad bit windy, and I still forged ahead and mustered up courage to take the test. I was gleeful when I passed; I felt accomplished and claimed bragging rights for taking a test in less than ideal conditions.

One of my fondest memories was witnessing my mother's creative side. She befriended Michiko, our neighbor across the street, and they became close friends. Mom and Michiko decided to take art classes together and it was during that time I realized my mother was blessed with an abundance of creative talent. She became skilled at making origami and silk flowers and I was in awe of her. My mother was often approached to sell her original creations; however, she chose to give them away to those who appreciated it since she enjoyed making others happy.

My mother channeled her grief through artistic expression. Grief at losing her youngest sister, who died from an illness before she lost both parents in the Korean War; grief from badly missing her mother, to whom she was very close; grief from losing the grandmother who raised her when her parents tragically died during the war; grief from trying hard to raise children in a world where she was often shunned because of her race and considered a foreigner and fearful we would experience the same discrimination.

When my father died suddenly and unexpectedly from a massive heart attack, she handled her grief by creating gorgeous and unique origami ornaments and cranes. My mother also learned to make jewelry and roses out of bread clay. The gene for exquisite artistry soundly skipped me and my children were fortunate enough to inherit it.

It is a disservice to Asian women to be stereotyped and depicted as subservient women. That is not the woman who raised me. My mother emphasized the importance of higher education and becoming independent, teaching me the criticality of self-reliance and not depending on anyone else to take care of me. She taught me to be resilient and strong, by the heroic and admirable way she chose to rise above any racism she experienced. **[cont'd]**



My mother never let the atrocities of the Korean War turn her into a bitter person. Instead, she became a woman who cherished and appreciated life since she knew all too well how unexpectedly and tragically it could be snatched away from you. She imbued a sense of curiosity and open mindedness and believed we should always strive to better ourselves. My mother encouraged me to learn more about those who crossed our paths and to refrain from being judgmental of them.

Chan Won Park (my mother) is my version of Wonder Woman. She raised four children essentially on her own since my father was often deployed or in the field for a training exercise. My mother made some of our clothes, since she is a skilled seamstress, and taught us how to make *yaki mandu* (fried Korean dumplings) and *kimchee*. I was amazed by her multitude of skills and I was absolutely enthralled by her.

Reflecting back on my middle school years living in Okinawa, I equate it to a beautiful epiphany. It was an awakening of my soul in recognizing writing is my chosen form of expression, and writing is also cathartic for me and can engender immeasurable joy. And it was during those memorable years

that I witnessed my mother's artistic side unfold and I learned to appreciate the serene beauty of artistic expression.

Decades later, I am not internally shrieking, "Get me back on the plane right now!" I am enthusiastically proclaiming it since I would love to go back to Okinawa someday. I found my voice and passion in Okinawa and I thoroughly relished living in a tropical isle. And yes, I undoubtedly would try to find my beloved Hello Kitty store since she is still *kawaii* (cute) and sentimentally meaningful to me. Throw in some mochi and a trip to the beach, and I very well may consider overcoming my gecko phobia and befriending a couple and naming them Lilo and Stitch.

I am more than ready for another adventurous odyssey in Okinawa. A girl can dream, right? Until then, I will always be eternally grateful I was blessed to spend a total of eight years living there. I became immersed in the Okinawan culture and genuinely appreciated it. I fully embraced the island life and learned more about my mother and myself. I am indebted to you, Okinawa: you left an indelible impression on me.

***Nifée deebiiru*** (Okinawan thank you), my pleasurable and picturesque paradise.



### Okinawa

Okinawa is the tropical southernmost prefecture of Japan. The prefecture consists of about 160 islands, which are scattered over a 350-mile-long area. The main regions are ***Okinawa Honto*** (the main island of Okinawa), ***Kerama Shoto*** (the Kerama Islands), ***Kumejima*** (Kume Island), ***Miyako Shoto*** (the Miyako Islands) and ***Yaeyama Shoto*** (the Yaeyama Islands).

A population of about 1.4 million lives on 466 square miles of land scattered over these islands. The people live in near-perfect tropical conditions, where the average temperature is 73.4 degrees F and a single rainy season lasts from early May to mid- or late June. By day they swim in turquoise waters off broad, sandy beaches; by night they dine on fresh pineapple under starry skies. These paradisiacal islands in the East China Sea between Taiwan and the Japanese mainland are a place where many have dreamed of living.

# Native Hawaiian Ways of Learning



Above: Hawaiian grandpa and his children. Stock photo.

Native Hawaiians exemplify patterns of [observational learning](#), a model that captures seven interrelated descriptions, or facets, of learning found in indigenous communities in the Americas. Native Hawaiian views on learning flow from three basic tenets that correspond directly to the observational learning model: "*I ka nānā no a 'ike*: by observing, one learns. *I ka ho'olohe no a ho'omaopopo*: by listening, one commits to memory. *I ka hana no a 'ike*: by practice one masters the skill."

## Learner collaboration and contribution

Similar to the indigenous communities of the Americas, Native Hawaiian children contribute alongside the adults, and the adults' presence is there to offer support. In most Native Hawaiian communities, household work tasks, such as ironing and cooking, etc., play a major role in contributing to the home life and children's participation enhances their importance within the family. Native Hawaiian children have shared aspirations to accomplish [collaborative](#) tasks, and they individually take initiative to work together. Children absorb very early the community-wide belief that *hana* (work) is respected and laziness is shameful. The phrase "*E ho'ohuli ka lima i lalo*" (The palms of the hands should be turned down) was used to communicate the idea that idleness (associated with upturned palms) was to be avoided.

## Collaborative and flexible ensembles

Native Hawaiian children [cooperate](#) with flexible leadership to combine their skills, ideas, and abilities, like that found in [observational learning](#) in the indigenous communities of the Americas. Family organization is a "shared-function" system that includes flexible roles and fluid responsibility within the group. Basic family values include interdependence, responsibility for others, sharing of work and resources, obedience, and respect. Children assume important family responsibilities early and act as members of a sibling workforce that is held collectively responsible for completing tasks.

Children also take initiative to help others in the classroom. It has been observed that when children are working in a group with their peers and face difficulty, they will either scan the room for an adult to assist or turn to their close fellows to ask for help. Children also scan to provide help to others when necessary. In this way, children shift between the roles of assisted and assistant.

[cont'd]



Adults were present and available, but the children were more often found to take the initiative to learn from, and teach, one another how to perform tasks such as sweeping, homework, and caring for younger siblings.

### Learning to transform participation

Among Native Hawaiians, the goal of learning is to transform [participation](#) to encompass conscientious accountability as active contributing members of the community, like that found in [Learning by Observing and Pitching In](#) (LOPI). For example, in some Native Hawaiian communities, parents teach the older siblings the necessary skills of care taking. Sibling caretaking skills can relate to indigenous American ways of learning by the children becoming considerate of their parents and taking on the responsibility when needed in case of a tragic incident with the parents. Within the classroom and home settings, adults are present but are not always directly monitoring the children. Children ask for help when necessary, but adults appear to rarely interject. Children appeared to adapt to tasks and situations by observations and go off on their own to collectively work out how and what to do to complete the task.

[Assuming and initiating care](#) has been found across Polynesian cultures, and Native Hawaiian practices are in keeping with this trend. One study observed, interviewed, and evaluated families on the Polynesian Island [Sikaiana](#) and found that fostering children from other families within the community is a common shared endeavor that serves to construct relationships, support the community, and nurture compassion and sympathy ([aloha](#)). As children mature within the family, they go through a process of having their needs attended and learn to provide and care for the younger children alongside the adults. Adolescent girls who are active caretakers are referred to as parents, even if there is no biological connection.

### Wide and keen attention for contribution

The Hawaiians' ways of learning include wide keen attention from the children while adults are available for guidance, also found in the model of Learning by Observing and Pitching In. Children were found to learn from adults by participating in group activities where they had the chance to observe the performance of more experienced participants as well as having errors in their own performance corrected by more seasoned group members. Because the children [learn through observation](#), and then are encouraged to practice among their peers, we can speculate the children have keen attention to events around them, which is an expectation of adults and community members who are there to assist when needed. It has been observed that Hawaiian children were successful at completing tasks which greatly depend on visual and memory process skills, which coincides with Hawaiian mother's frequent use of nonverbal communication. *[cont'd]*



*Above: playing the ukulele. Left: children performing hula. Photos courtesy NPS Hawaii*



## Diversity in Action: Hawaiian Ways of Learning (continued)

### Coordination through shared reference

In some Native Hawaiian communities, there is a constant use of “talk story,” which plays an essential role in promoting solidarity in the community by not overpowering or making the members of the community feel inadequate for not understanding something. Talk story can consist of recalled events, folktales, and joking. Joking can be used to tease and guide the children about how to do a chore better or to avoid

A study comparing Midwestern and Hawaiian mother – Kindergartener pairs presented with a novel task found Hawaiian mothers to be much lower than their Midwestern counterparts in the use of verbal-control techniques and much higher in non-verbal communication, a finding which implies coordination through [nonverbal](#) and verbal means. Aspects of togetherness, continuity, purpose, and significance are a part of learning and coincide with the Native Hawaiian's spiritual connection to earth and environment.



serious trouble. Talk story relates to an Indigenous way of learning by providing conversations such as narratives and dramatizations with verbal and nonverbal communication between the elder and children.

Another example of verbal communication in the Native Hawaiian culture is through the use of [chanting](#), which can allow a child to understand the relationship of their present experiences to those of their ancestors, both alive and deceased. Chanting also allows children to understand the connections of their chants to mother earth. For instance, chanting can voice the need for rain to produce plants and induce ponds to grow fish for harvest.

### Feedback that appraises mastery and support for learning

There is verbal and nonverbal guidance from parents to children with chores and other activities. For example, a pat on the shoulder can communicate to the child that he/she is doing the activity at hand the correct way. This example relates to the LOPI model by there being an appraisal from the parents in order to support their progress in learning and contributing better in the community. As the child gradually advances towards more complex tasks, the goal of mastery and feedback on the adequacy of their contributions become more pronounced.

In the context of producing objects such as baskets, mats, or quilts, there was a belief that a child must produce a perfect end-product before moving on to learn the skills of producing something else. Perfection in these products was judged by more experienced craftspeople and was attained by repeated attempts interspersed with feedback. The perfected final products were kept as a special reminder and never used. Their production was seen as a necessary first step in "clearing the way" for other products to come; an indication of mastery for that skill set. Throughout several research articles, it becomes clear that many of the Native Hawaiian ways of learning resemble the defining characteristics of LOPI, which is common in many Indigenous communities of the Americas.

***The history of surfing in Hawaii dates back to at least the 4th-century CE when Polynesians began to make their way to the Hawaiian Islands from Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands. Pictured: vintage art and surfboard (Wikipedia)***





## Chinese American World War II Veterans Receive Congressional Gold Medal

Courtesy [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

On December 9, 2020, Chinese-American World War II Veterans received a Congressional Gold Medal during a virtual ceremony. Several Chinese-American Veterans spoke during the event and accepted the medal virtually.

“We answered the call to duty when our country faced threats to our freedom,” said 102-year old Army Veteran **Elsie Chin Yuen Seetoo**, who served as a nurse with the 14th Army Air Force in China. “Now, I welcome my fellow Veterans who are watching, for the many who are not able to watch or who have already passed on. May they be with us in spirit.”

The 20,000 Veterans collectively received the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow, said U.S. Rep. **Judy Chu**, whose father, Justin, was an Army radio communications sergeant in Okinawa.

“It was a life-changing experience for him,” Chu said. “He formed bonds with his fellow service members, men he would have never known otherwise, but whose bonds were strengthened by their shared sense of purpose. They were serving a cause and a country they believed in.”

Eligible Veterans – and if deceased, the surviving spouse or the closest next of kin – can receive a replica medal. The eligibility for Chinese American Veterans are those who served between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946 in one of the military services or Merchant Marine as an officer or enlisted. Eligible Veterans or family members who wish to receive a replica medal can go to [www.caww2.org](http://www.caww2.org), click “REGISTER VETERANS” and “SUBMIT INFORMATION” to complete the CGM application form. There are instructions, including uploading requisite documents.

An estimated 20,000 Chinese-Americans served in the U.S. armed forces during World War II. Approximately 40% of those were not U.S. citizens due to laws that denied citizenship to people of Chinese descent. Chinese-Americans served in all branches of the armed forces and all theaters of the war.



Many Chinese-Americans served with the 14th Air Force in the China-Burma-India theater. Serving under [Claire Lee](#)

[Chennault](#), Flying Tiger members flew dangerous missions over the Himalayas, known as “the Hump.” Crews defended the Chinese end of the Hump route and supported the Chinese army. In May 1943, Flying Tigers using B-24s bombed Japanese shipping off the Chinese coast. Much of the bombers’ available flying hours, however, were spent hauling their own supplies over the Hump in support of bombing missions.

One Chinese-American

received the Medal of Honor during World War II: [Francis Brown Wai](#) [pictured, right], a United States Army captain who was killed in action during the U.S. amphibious assault and liberation of the Philippine Islands from Japan in 1944. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for extraordinary heroism in action on Leyte.

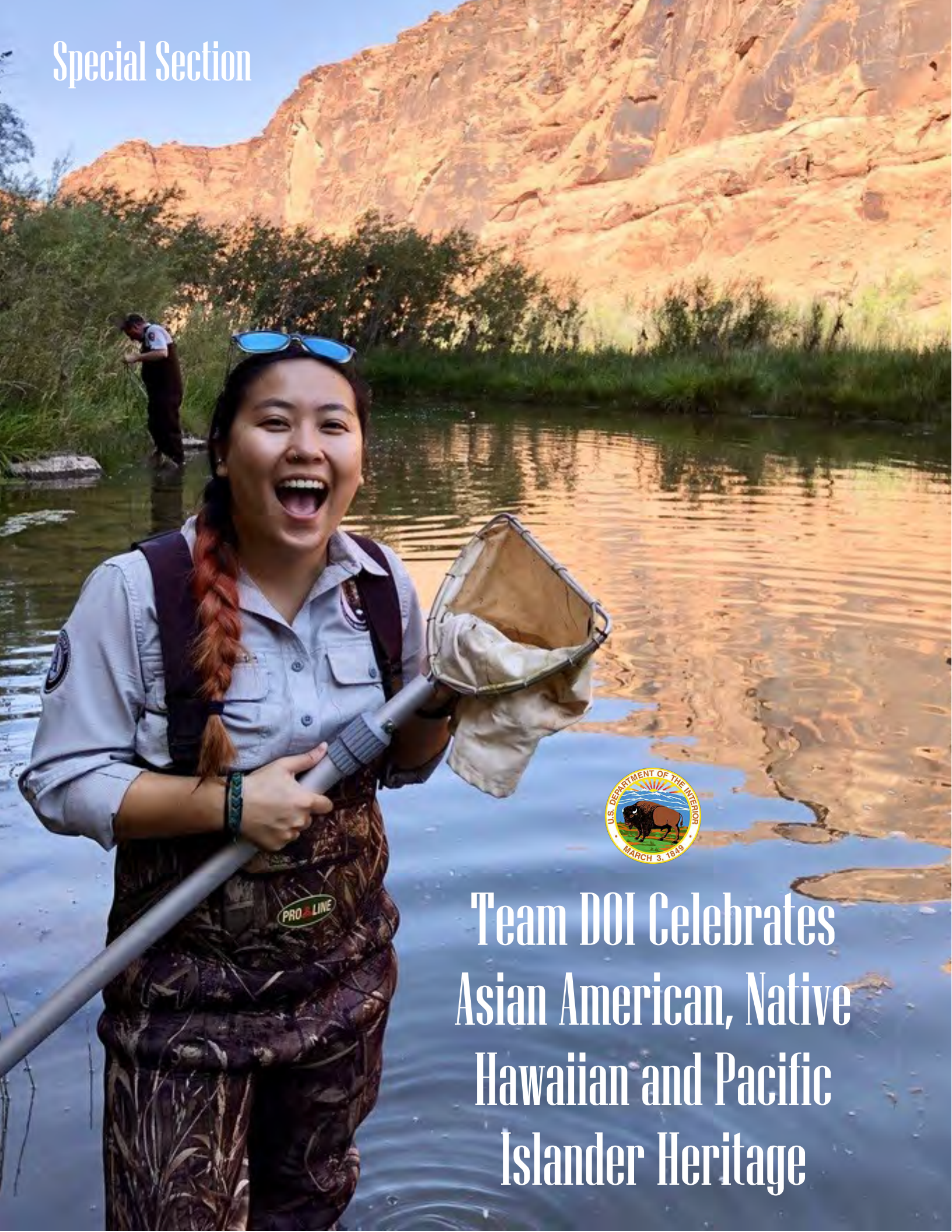


*Pictured, above: U.S. Army nurses (left to right) “Muzzy,” Elsie Chin Yuen Seetoo, Wolverton, and Lymas pose in a garden outside the temporary nurses quarters in Chengdu, China, in the spring of 1945.*





Special Section



Team DOI Celebrates  
Asian American, Native  
Hawaiian and Pacific  
Islander Heritage





The following are just a few of the many individuals of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander heritage who proudly serve in the Department of the Interior and exemplify our theme: ***Advancing Leaders through Purpose-Driven Service***. We hope you enjoy meeting these remarkable team members as much as we did! - The Connections Team

**Lauren Cruz, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS  
Eastern Virginia Rivers National  
Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC),  
Warsaw, VA**

My mom inspired me to care about the environment and respect the environment around me. Growing up by the jungle of the Philippines, she was always outside, climbing trees, catching bugs and tasting fruits that she found. She passed this love of wildlife and spirit of adventure to my sisters and me who would do similar things in the pine barrens of NJ, climbing trees, catching frogs and even identifying birds. Following this passion and my family's affinity to science, I pursued a degree in conservation biology and worked in many coastal and riverine ecosystems. This experience landed me a career with USFWS as a refuge biologist at [Eastern Virginia Rivers NWRC](#). With the USFWS, I've been able to share my passion and reverence for nature with the public while restoring habitat for our wildlife. My Filipino heritage keeps me grounded in my values, reminding me to respect and care for our natural world and its inhabitants.

When I was in kindergarten, my family went to the Philippines over the holiday vacation. While there, my mom was so excited to show off the places she would visit and explore when she was a child. One day, we were on the beach and she taught me all about starfish and how they came in beautiful different colors, sizes and shapes but would all still convene in one area.



**Above: Photo by Chase Mullins/USFWS. Below: Lauren holding a starfish (far left) with mom, sisters and cousins on a beach in Cebu City, Philippines.**







**Katherine Ko, Biologist, NPS Air Resources Division,  
[Natural Resource Stewardship and Science](#)  
[Directorate](#), Lakewood, CO**

I am a Biologist for the National Park Service Air Resources Division. One of my main duties is to help coordinate the [Dragonfly Mercury Project](#), a nationwide study that engages citizen scientists and community volunteers in the collection of dragonfly larvae for mercury analysis. I love connecting with park staff all over the country and providing volunteers - especially youth and diverse communities - with this opportunity to explore their parks in a unique and impactful way.

***Why is Earth Day so important to you?***

Earth Day is a chance to remind people to take care of the world that gives so much to us. All of my fondest childhood memories involve being outside, and now more than ever I believe we need to rediscover that passion and stewardship. It is also a reminder that no matter how different people may look or seem, we all share this Earth and have a duty to preserve it for future generations. By taking care of the land, making intentional choices, and being mindful about our impact, we are also looking out for the well-being of the entire human race.

***What special role do DOI employees play in supporting the environment?***

It is our job to study what affects the environment and report out on the truth. I am in awe of my coworkers, who do everything from analyzing soils to teaching youth programs to advocating for environmental justice. Our goal is to protect public lands and foster inclusive and sustainable connections with these places, and that is the driving force behind all the that work we do. We play so many different roles in order to make a difference, and I am lucky and grateful to be a part of it.

***How can others join the effort to improve natural resources throughout the world?***

The simplest step forward is to have a conversation with someone. Share why you love the outdoors and what inspires you to be an active agent. It's easy to get overwhelmed thinking about passing laws or challenging large corporations, but I always feel like I'm making the slightest difference by sharing my passion for the environment with someone. The next person you talk to might just be the one who finds the perfect solution!







**Katherine Willard, Administrative Assistant, NPS  
Vienna, VA**

I have wanted to become a federal employee ever since I graduated from college. While I was in graduate school, I was hired as a Student Trainee in Administration at [Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts](#). Sadly, about a month into my new job, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the country and sent many of the office workers home—and cancelled our 2020 performance season. Fortunately, my new colleagues have been wonderful and very understanding. After graduating in May 2021, I look forward to experiencing my very first performance season—even though it’s with many pandemic restrictions. In the meantime, I enjoy teleworking because I can spend more time with my cats (*Garbo is pictured, left*), but I also like going into the office because I like walking in the Wolf Trap Woods during my breaks. I love meeting all my fellow NPS colleagues at other national parks in the National Capital Area, and I’m excited to meet even more people and see more parks outside of my region.

When my parents came to China to adopt me, they flew over with 10 other families. At the end of their two weeks in China with their 11 new babies, one of the grandparents suggested to continue meeting every year at his beach house in Cape Cod. So every year since I was a year old, the adoption group China 11 spends a weekend up in Cape Cod. It is a tradition that I hope to continue for the rest of my life. The group has grown to include siblings, friends, and spouses over the years. While it is harder for all of the original 11 families to meet up every year like we used to, this is a tradition that I have never missed and never will. Growing up in a predominantly white family and neighborhood, it was so refreshing to spend time with not only other Asian Americans but people that I’ve truly known for my whole life. When I was younger, I felt anxious because I didn’t have a Chinese family. However, China 11 has become my Chinese family—and they will always have a special place in my heart.



*Premier cellist Yo-Yo Ma (left) is just one of thousands of brilliant musicians, dancers and performers that take the stage during Wolf Trap’s Summer season each year. The 7000-seat [Filene Center](#) (below) and other venues are situated in the lush 117-acre National Park in Vienna, Virginia. Photos NPS*







**Jacob Tung, Park Ranger, NPS Visitor and Resource Protection, Mount Rainier National Park, Ashford, WA**

My first visit to a national park as an adult was to Big Bend National Park while on a college road trip. At the time, I was failing most of my courses and about to drop out of school. My life was full of uncertainty. Unbeknownst to me, that trip laid the foundation for my future with the National Park Service. Having grown up in the suburbs and the city, I lacked any significant connection to public lands and outdoor recreation. Big Bend opened my eyes to a wider world that I didn't even know existed. Ultimately, I did drop out of school and worked menial jobs for several years, but during that time, that one trip to Big Bend remained in my mind. Inspired by that memory, I eventually returned and finished college with the express goal of becoming a park ranger. I've now been a park ranger with the

NPS for sixteen years. This profession has provided me the opportunity to help people in need and have amazing experiences in some of the most unique places in the world, including White Sands, Arches, Canyonlands, Death Valley, Sequoia, Grand Canyon, and now, Mount Rainier.

My parents immigrated to the U.S. from Taiwan in 1974. From an early age, we spoke Mandarin around the house. Becoming fluent in Mandarin before becoming fluent in English has given me insight into nuances of communication and cultural differences that tend to get magnified when people from disparate backgrounds interact. This has proven especially useful for working with the public in the national parks, with people traveling from all over the world to visit. A bonus is providing language interpretation for visitors from Mandarin-speaking countries.





**Dong Choe, Guam Field Representative, Office of Insular Affairs, Washington, D.C.**

***Hafa Adai!***

Since August 2020 I have had the privilege and honor to serve as the Guam Field Representative for the Office of Insular Affairs. As the Field Representative I have been able to work with the local government and island organizations to address some of the challenges the island community faces as well as provide assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During Lunar New Year, our family would gather at my mom's oldest sister's house for dinner. After dinner it is traditional for my uncle to gather all the kids and give them money and words of wisdom for the new year. This tradition has always been a great way for me to start the year by reflecting on the year that passed and how to progress for the year ahead. This tradition continues every year and now I am one of the uncles that gives money and advice to kids.



**Office of Insular Affairs**

The Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, and the [Office of Insular Affairs](#) (OIA) carry out the Secretary's responsibilities for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

**Latte Stone Park**

The *Chamorro* people may have arrived on Guam as many as 4,500 years ago, coming across the sea from the Philippines and Southeast Asia. **Latte Stone Park** (*pictured, above*) has some of the oldest traces of this original culture: house pillars, topped by stones that look like big bowls, date back to around 500 C.E. (A walk among the latte stones, some as much as 20 feet tall, is as close as you can get to a walk through ancient Guam. Picture courtesy [Guam Visitors Bureau](#).)





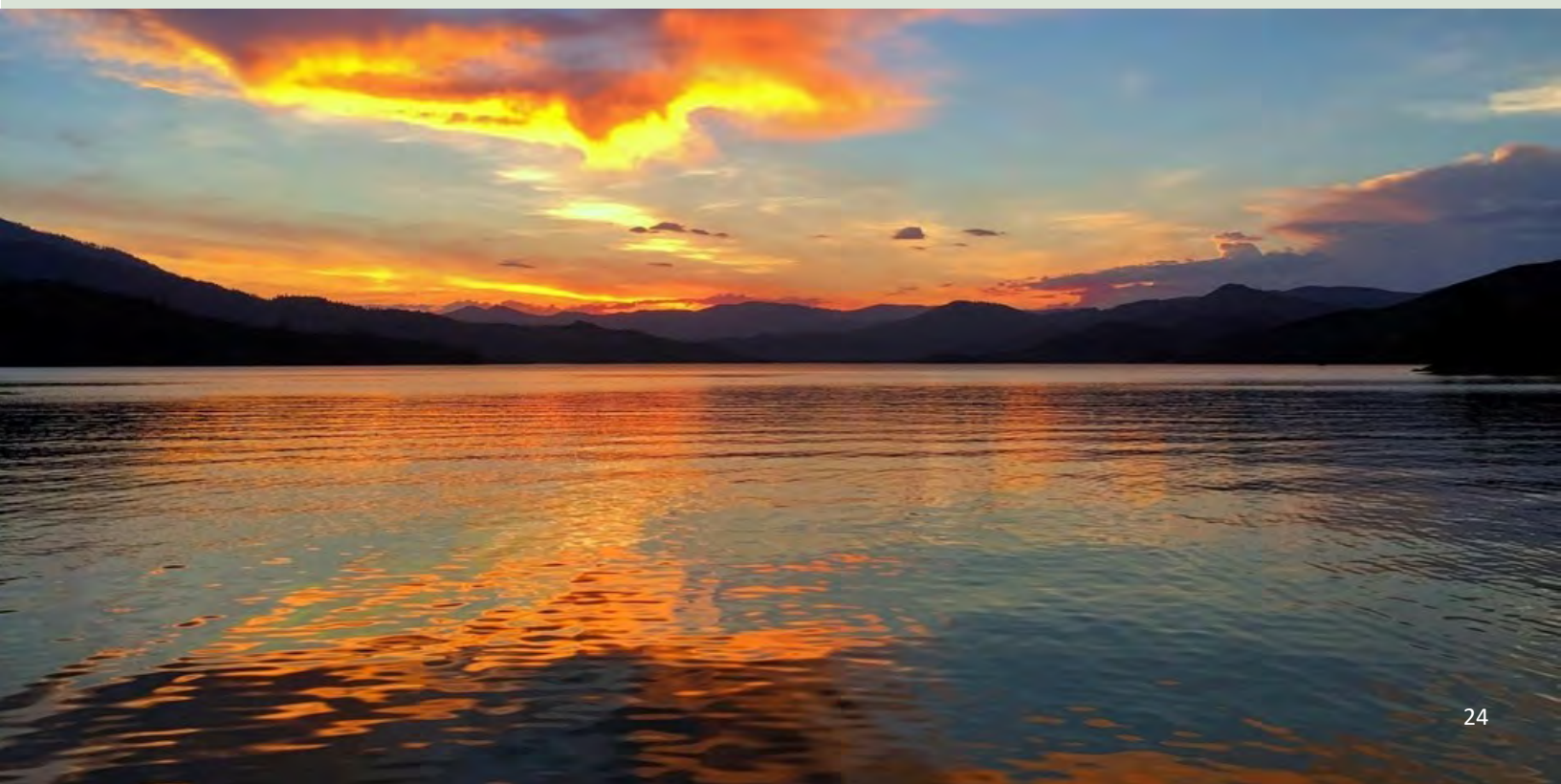
### Yunqing Sara Ye, Biological Science Technician, NPS Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, CA

As I was growing up, my parents sometimes took us to national parks, where we attended guided walks in the parks. Being a kid whose next life goal was to finally be eligible to join the school's Eco Club in fourth grade, these park rangers were naturally my role models.

Now, as a recent college graduate, I've managed to check off another life goal: to become like my heroes of childhood. I also hope that I can be an example for other Asian children interested in nature because, even as a child, I noticed that I hadn't seen someone who looked like me clad in Ranger Green and Grey among the rangers I met. Hopefully, I can show at least one Asian child that there are options other than doctor or computer scientist, especially when the environment needs so much attention now.

I'm still very new to the NPS and DOI, having only started my seasonal position in Whiskeytown at the end of April, but I'm eager to see what the next few months and beyond will bring.

*Below: Whiskeytown Lake's crystal clear water is perhaps the most recognized feature of the park. However, water-based recreation is only a part of what the 42,000-acre [Whiskeytown National Recreation Area](#) has to offer. Visit waterfalls, hike through rugged mountains, explore California Gold Rush history, and observe post-fire ecology in action. Your national park is calling! Photo NPS*







**Janet Cushing, Deputy Chief,  
National Climate Adaptation  
Science Center, USGS Reston, VA**

I'm proud to be a public servant through the federal government for over 20 years. My DOI journey is intertwined with the other parts of my federal career. I first joined the US Geological Survey (USGS) in 2005, working in the Fisheries Program and helping to manage the national portfolio of fisheries research and supporting the Science and Data Committee of the National Fish Habitat Board. From there I went to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Institute for Water Resources, working on emerging issues of interest to the ecosystem restoration mission of USACE. I was happy to return to USGS in 2015, where I am currently the Deputy Chief of the National Climate Adaptation Science Center. In this position, I help provide oversight over the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers, managing the administrative side of the house and engaging with government and nongovernment partners. What I love about my current job is the opportunity to engage with scientists and the resource management community, and support the amazing research that our staff and partners do to help planners and managers make better informed decisions when it comes to adapting to a changing climate.

There isn't one memory that has shaped my life or career but rather a conglomeration of events and memories. That said, they fall into two categories: summer weekend family outings, and the family road trips. I grew up on Long Island, NY, and



just about every weekend during the summer when I was a kid, my parents took me fishing or crabbing. We would be out the entire day, and I remember spending hours exploring the shore, catching fish, playing with crabs that we caught, and collecting rocks and seashells. During family road trips, I would look out the window and marvel at the sections of the highway where there were road cuts – those areas where one can see rock layers, faults, folds, and other geologic structures that are normally hidden; I would wonder how those layers came to be and what stories they held about the evolution of the planet.

These frequent trips that brought me into contact with the natural world and sparked my curiosity played a major role in the decisions I made that led me to where I am today.

**National and Regional Climate  
Adaptation Science Centers**

From the expansion of invasive species to wildfire, from drought to sea-level rise, climate change creates new and evolving challenges for ecosystems across the nation.

[The USGS National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers](#) is a partnership-driven program that teams scientific researchers with natural and cultural resource managers and local communities to help fish, wildlife, waters, and lands across the country adapt to changing conditions.





### **Brenda Ling, Public Affairs Officer, NPS Staten Island, NY**

I have been with Gateway National Recreation Area (NY/NJ) for three years. During this time, I have been fortunate to have a great superintendent, who encouraged and supported me to make the [Asian American Employee Resource Group](#) (ERG) a reality. This affinity group with the National Park Service (NPS) began in 2020 with a dozen employees. It has grown to 100 members since becoming official in early April.

The recent rise in anti-Asian incidents and violence against our Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities highlights the need for immediate and direct support. Many, including Asian American NPS staff, are struggling right now with anger, fear, frustration, and profound sadness. In times like these, ERGs can and should play an important role in supporting staff when they need it most, while also serving as a voice for those members. The Asian

American ERG also serves as a resource to the agency as a whole as it strives to support Asian American employees and communities.

During the summers, my family would join other Chinese families on bus tours. We visited park sites up and down the East Coast. Those trips opened my eyes to places beyond Chinatown in New York City. One day, on one of the trips, mom saw a young woman driving alongside the bus. Mom had seen lots of women drive alone but seeing that young woman breeze by on the highway gave her pause. She turned to me and said, "You will learn to drive and be as free as her, going anywhere you want, whenever you want." After college, I left New York City and lived in six states before moving back home. Mom was right. Knowing how to drive made a difference in taking on career opportunities outside of metro areas.

*Below: Brenda Ling, front left, marched in the National Park Service contingent for the Stonewall 50—World Pride NYC 2019 Parade.*







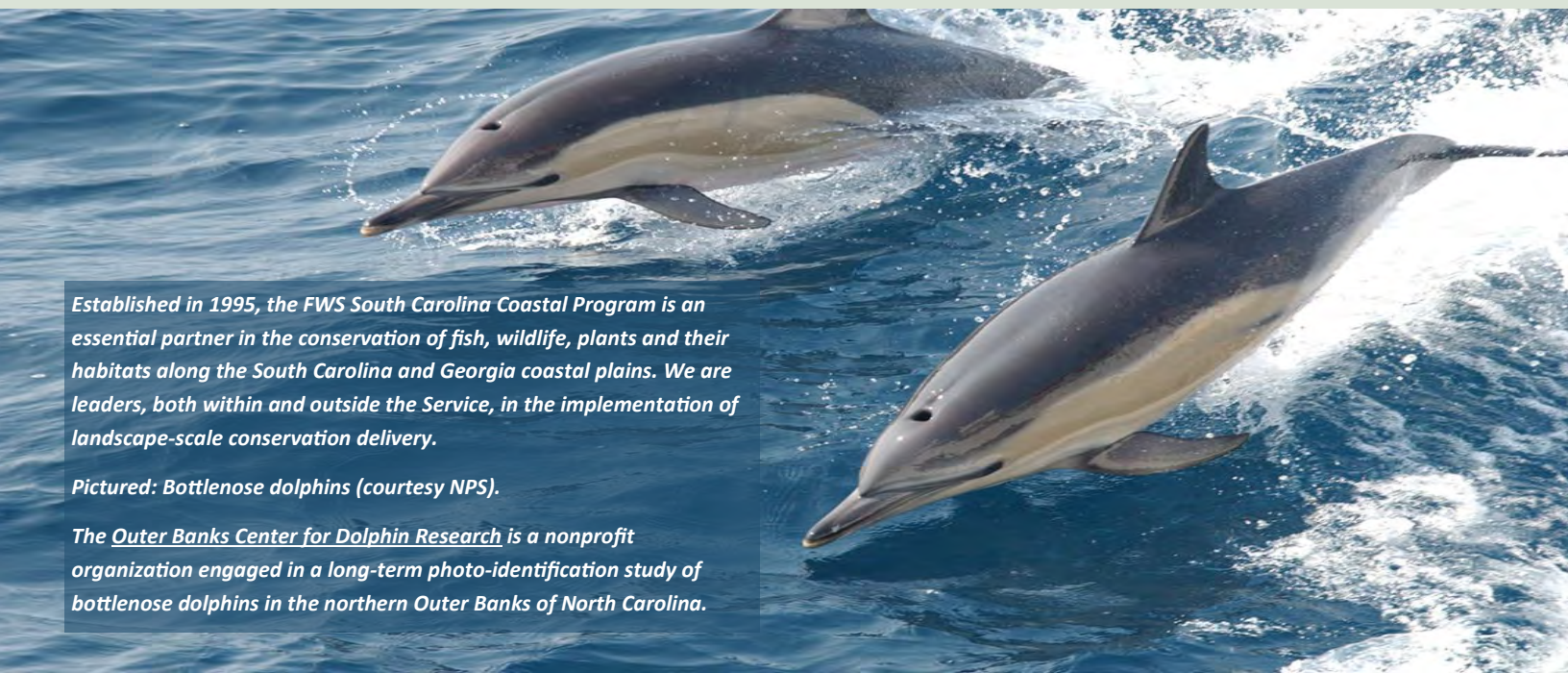
**Christopher Hernandez, Coastal Program Biologist, USFWS South Carolina Field Office, Charleston, SC**

I started with FWS as an intern at [Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge](#) (NWR) for three summers starting in 2007. I then was a biologist at [Back Bay](#) NWR for two years and have been with the [South Carolina Coastal Program](#) since 2012.

My parents really value the institutions that protect America's cultural and natural heritage. I have fond childhood memories scrambling around the replica soldier's cabins at [Morristown National Historical Park](#) and wandering through the woods at [Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area](#) in my home state of New Jersey. But more so than that, my parents' education in American history came through seeing the places where it happened.

As immigrants from the Philippines, my parents didn't learn about America in a textbook but took my siblings and me on road trips to see it firsthand. Our schooling in history happened at [Saratoga](#), [Harpers Ferry](#), and [Mesa Verde](#). We saw geology and biology in action at [Arches](#), the [Everglades](#), and the [New River Gorge](#).

As a member of the DOI family I feel it is my duty to be a steward of America's heritage so future generations may learn and contribute to the American story.



*Established in 1995, the FWS South Carolina Coastal Program is an essential partner in the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats along the South Carolina and Georgia coastal plains. We are leaders, both within and outside the Service, in the implementation of landscape-scale conservation delivery.*

*Pictured: Bottlenose dolphins (courtesy NPS).*

*The [Outer Banks Center for Dolphin Research](#) is a nonprofit organization engaged in a long-term photo-identification study of bottlenose dolphins in the northern Outer Banks of North Carolina.*





**Angelica (Angel) Sprague, Biological Science Technician, NPS John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez, CA**

My academic background is in Wildlife Biology/Conservation. I started at NPS as a volunteer, hoping to expand my wildlife trapping experience to include small mammals (rodents) after I finished graduate school researching bats and hibernation.

I applied for the Natural Resources Internship opening soon after I volunteered. That was my first experience with the NPS. I was an ACE (AmeriCorps/EPIC) Natural Resources Intern from 2018 to 2020. I applied for the Biological Science Technician position at John Muir National Historic Site in 2020 when the position became available, and I was accepted. It has been the most wonderfully exciting and fulfilling experience so far!

Growing up in a half-Filipino, half-Caucasian family, the importance of food and family was forever ingrained into my way of life, as well as the importance of patience, compassion, and acceptance. It has intricately shaped the person I am today and the values and morals that I live by and bring into my life and workplace.

Also shaping the person I am were the many childhood visits to one of my favorite places in the world, [Mt. Tamalpais State Park](#) in Marin County, where my whole family would meet to hike and picnic. The redwoods, cypress and oak woodlands spurred my love for nature and the outdoors. It is where my passion, endless curiosity, and amazement of our natural world sparked, and where I knew that my respect for culture and love for the outdoors would meet.





**Kelsea Larsen, Management Support Specialist,  
NPS San Francisco, CA**

My DOI career has taken me from a student position at [Pearl Harbor National Memorial](#), to [Mount Rainier National Park](#) where I started my first permanent position close to home, and to my current job at the NPS Regional Office for Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12 in San Francisco.

Growing up as “*Quapa*” (quarter Japanese), I never knew if I could validly identify myself as an Asian American. I was not sure if I was “Nikkei enough” without strong Japanese cultural connections beyond my own family members. It was not until I went on the 2017 [Minidoka Pilgrimage](#) with my Grandma Fujiko that I discovered that many connections throughout my life and career did exist. For example, Pearl Harbor was the catalyst of WWII. Mount Rainier is the icon of the landscape of the home that my family was forcibly removed from in 1942 when my grandma was only 10 years old. [Minidoka](#) was the arid, flat landscape where they were incarcerated. The chance to represent myself as a park ranger and a descendent of internees was a powerful moment for my personal identity.

On the last day of the Minidoka Pilgrimage, Grandma proclaimed that her favorite part of the whole experience was spending time with the park staff and partners who made our time there so special. It made

my green and grey heart burst with joy – I never imagined that my family heritage and career could come together in such a way!

Since then, my grandma and I have attended many different remembrance events, and connected on a deeper level. I have learned so much, both personally and professionally, about our history and myself. I am grateful for the opportunities to relate with my AAPI identity through the sites of the National Park Service. Through these experiences, I have finally found my Nikkei community.



Kelsea and her Grandmother Fujiko attending the Minidoka Pilgrimage in 2017. Photo by Mark Southern/NPS

*“It made you feel that you knew what it was to die, to go somewhere you couldn’t take anything but what you had inside you. And so it strengthened you. I think from then on we were very strong. I don’t think anything could get us down now.”*

*- Margaret Takahashi, an internee reflecting on the internment experience*

Japanese internment camps were established during [World War II](#) by President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) through his [Executive Order 9066](#). From 1942 to 1945, it was the policy of the U.S. government that people of Japanese descent, including U.S. citizens, would be incarcerated in isolated camps. Enacted in reaction to the [Pearl Harbor](#) attacks and the ensuing war, the incarceration of Japanese Americans is considered one of the most atrocious violations of American civil rights in the 20th century. [Read more here.](#)



**Alexi McHugh, Pathways Park Guide, NPS  
Washington, D.C.**

After many, many attempts to get into the federal employment system I was fortunate to find my way to a COVID-19 hire position at [Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens](#) in Washington, DC. I was fortunate to be supported by great coworkers and supervisors as well as mentors along the way. Now, I am thankful to be supporting [Rock Creek Park](#) as a Pathways Park Guide.

While we didn't grow up going to all of the National Parks I have found so much in nature. Pre-COVID-19, I was in the desert, really scared of tarantulas that were crawling around where I was sleeping for the night. It was humbling, awe-inspiring, and a completely new environment. The challenge, humility, and power nature brings never fails to balance my life.

**Ricavelle "Rica" Dyas, Supervisory Human Resources  
Specialist, NPS Klamath Falls, OR**

A second generation National Park Service employee, I grew up aware of the parks and started volunteering for the NPS at age 12. My father was the former Historian at [Antietam National Battlefield](#) and fostered my love of history. During Vietnam he was stationed in the Philippines where he met my mother, married her and brought us to the United States. I grew up going to various historical parks and monuments in the East. After graduating college I embarked on my own career with NPS by taking seasonal Park Ranger jobs out West. I worked in various occupations: Park Ranger, Visitor Use Assistant, Park Guide, Administrative Assistant, Human Resources Assistant and Human Resources Specialist. My lifelong love of the NPS started with the special places it protects and the wonderful people I have met over the years.



**Where Water and Wind Dance**

Deep within [Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens](#) lies an oasis, hidden behind trees and cattails. It's a place where beavers build their homes and turtles sleep on logs. Lotuses rise from the muck and lilies sit on the water. The wind dances with the dragonflies, rustling through the trees, carrying the song of the birds until it brushes across your face, fading to a whisper, saying "come join." Check out this [video introduction](#). Photo NPS





**Yenfen F. Chan, Park Ranger, NPS Yosemite National Park, Yosemite, CA**

I began my career with NPS in the summer of 2003 as a park ranger in Yosemite National Park. The following year, I obtained a permanent position with the NPS and have been working for the Division of Interpretation and Education in Yosemite ever since. I develop and present numerous programs for the public on the park’s natural and cultural history, work on community outreach initiatives, supervise and mentor park staff, and work on additional projects including developing exhibits and interpretive signs. One project that I have led since 2013 is an annual multi-day event to celebrate and honor the contributions made by Chinese immigrants in Yosemite’s history. Currently, I am working with Yosemite’s exhibit team to develop a new permanent exhibit on this history that will open to the public later this summer.

As a youth growing up in Los Angeles, my family was not accustomed to camping or hiking in our national parks. My first experience backpacking was as a sophomore in high school on a school field trip. We hiked into a small sequoia grove in Yosemite and spent two nights in the backcountry. I still recall the wonder that I felt looking up at the night sky and seeing so many stars. I also gained an appreciation and understanding of our connection to our air, land, and water and the importance of conservation. My high school trip to Yosemite was a catalyst for my interest in pursuing a career in the environmental field and in working for the NPS.

I studied and earned two bachelor's degrees in History and Environmental Studies from Yale and a master's degree in Environmental Policy and Natural Resources Management from the Yale School of the Environment. I worked as an environmental consultant and environmental policy and science researcher before my career with the NPS.





### **Amanita Cornejo, Environmental Protection Assistant, NPS San Francisco, CA**

Sharing food and receiving ancestral marks (tatau/batok/tattoo) are part of my heritage and are only a few of my family's traditions that are passed down that have shaped my working experience at DOI. Food is a sacred tradition that is used as a spiritual offering to our ancestors and it's sacred to our bodies. We are taught that sharing a meal with a person is an intimate act of unconditional love because you nurture, you share intention and space. In the same respect, sharing NPS sites' natural, cultural and historical resources with visitors presents a connection to protect the land to foster new Park stewards.

When I receive my ancestral [batok](#) the same way my ancestors received them, it's one of the few ways I can relate to my ancestors from hundreds if not thousands of years ago. It's one of the practices that has been taken away from my ancestors. Equivalently, relating NPS narrative and disclosing untold stories about our sites gives me empathy to search for these records in a different point of view to share these stories.

As an NPS employee I have a responsibility to use the institutional knowledge learned and provide it in a way that its relatable, inclusive, equitable and diverse for all park visitors.

**Batok/Fatek/Burik/Tatak/Batek/Patik/Batuk** are all terms for PrePhilippine hand-tapped tattoos or ancestral skin markings in different Philippine languages. The markings are done by using bone/ wood implements and ink, which are used to "tap" the designs into the skin. Unlike mainstream or machine tattoos, a practitioner uses and makes the ancestral implements to create skin markings.

In prePhilippine society, tattoos served as identifiers. They told others about your family history and where your family comes from in the Philippine archipelago. The markings are mnemonic devices of oral histories. Filipino-inspired designs that are found in tattoo shops are the artistic expressions of the tattoo artist. They may look aesthetically pleasing but are more than likely not authentic designs. More often than not, these designs also contain various motifs from across the Pacific Islands, especially Polynesia. Photo courtesy Britannica.







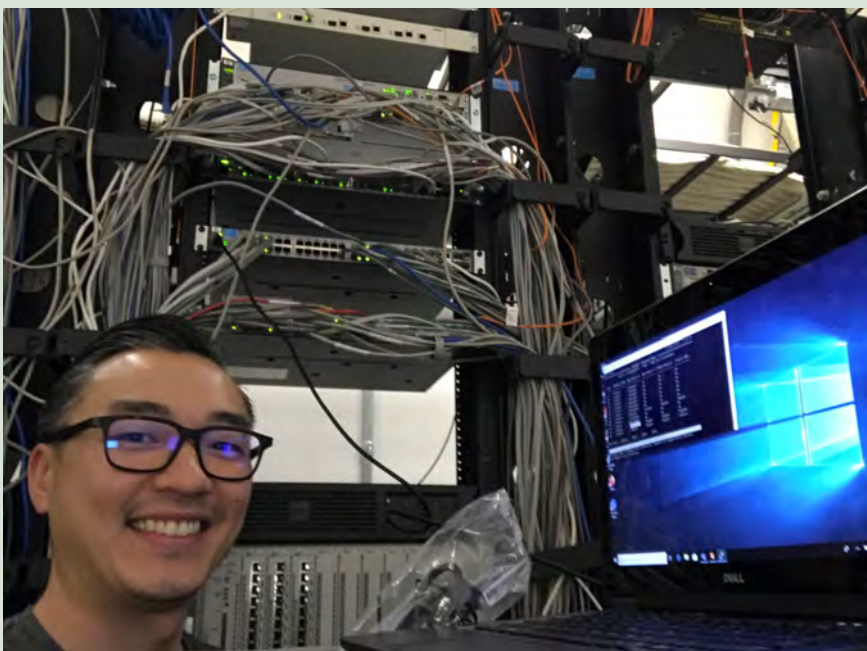
**Jerry Kwong, Information Technology Specialist, USGS Sacramento, CA**

I am celebrating 14 years with USGS/DOI this year. I started with USGS in the Student Career Experience Program in 2007, and graduated from California State University, Sacramento in 2010 with a Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems. I started at the USGS Western Ecological Research Center as a Help Desk/ Systems Administrator, moved to the USGS Chief Information Security Officer's Information Security Operations Team as a Cyber Security Specialist, and I am presently with the USGS Office of the Associate Chief Information Officer's End User Services Enterprise Services Team, serving as a Systems Administrator for a few cool projects such as Active Directory, macOS/JAMF management, and O365 Administration.

A special memory that shaped my career trajectory is that my parents and my sister always encouraged me to have a sense of pride in whatever I do, and to “give what is right, not what is left” in anything that you do. As the son of immigrants, my parents worked hard in what they were doing, and encouraged me to be the best person that I can be. They would both pass away before I turned 16, but my father toiled in the kitchen in the restaurant industry while my mother worked with Alzheimer patients as a certified nursing assistant.

My older and only sister would take me in after my parents passed, and saw to it that I continued to press on, and to do better. She encouraged me to go to school. I was proud to see my sister opening

her own hair salon after many years of hard work and dedication, and I returned the honor as she would see me graduate from college. My sister was ecstatic to see that I chose public service with USGS.







### Jennifer Chin, Program Assistant, USFWS Duck Stamp Office, Falls Church, VA

I was first introduced to the Department of Interior in 2012 when I was a US Fish & Wildlife Service Interpretation Intern at [Patuxent Research Refuge](#). I then completed college and went on to work as a contractor with USGS, also at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. I then had an opportunity to work with the National Park Service in San Francisco, CA on [Alcatraz Island](#). Then moving back to my home state, Maryland, I was a term Park Ranger with USFWS again, where it all started, at Patuxent Research Refuge.

I am currently the Program Assistant for the Federal Duck Stamp Office in Falls Church, VA and I feel so lucky to be a part of the Migratory Bird Family. I did not realize how many different agencies there were under the Department of Interior, but I feel fortunate to have worked with a few. My dream one day is to become the first Asian American Secretary of the Interior, if we don't reach that milestone before then.

Growing up, my grandparents had a house on the Potomac River where every summer we would spend time looking at dragonflies, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors. I loved fishing because my grandfather, Gong Gong, was an avid participant in Large Mouth Bass Tournaments. But I remember when I caught my first fish, it was a catfish. So, nothing special, but that day was so memorable to me because I was a tiny 7-year-old with just a piece of bamboo, fishing line and hook, but I still somehow managed to catch a fish.

### FWS Junior Duck Stamp Program

The [Junior Duck Stamp Program](#) is the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's premier [conservation education](#) initiative. The program teaches students across the nation conservation through the arts. Revenue generated by the [sales of Junior Duck Stamps](#) funds environmental education programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and several territories.

**Margaret McMullen**, an 18-year-old from Kansas, took top honors in the Service's National Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest with an acrylic painting of a pair of hooded mergansers [right]. Her artwork will grace the 2021-2022 Junior Duck Stamp, which will go on sale June 25 and supports conservation education for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The winning conservation message was by **Josie Arp**, 15, of Arkansas with her message: "When the world turned upside-down nature calmly and quietly laid a blanket of comfort over us all." Photo FWS







**Narrissa Brown, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Honolulu, HI**

I volunteered for the Service since 2013 at a wildlife refuge while attending UH Manoa. After falling in love with the staff and the USFWS mission, I came on board in 2018 with Ecological Services.

In my Native Hawaiian culture we believe that we need to protect our resources entrusted to us by our ancestors. We have a genealogical connection to the plants and animals in Hawaii and must protect them as we would family members. As a biologist who works with endangered species on a daily basis, I read about many of our forest bird species that have gone extinct and work to protect plants where there are only a handful of individuals left. I don't want future generations to learn about our remaining species from history books. I don't want my grandkids to wonder what birdsongs sound like the way that I do, rather I'd like them to spend time in the forest listening to the cacophony of recovered species themselves.



**Henry Chang, Chief, Policy, Economics, Risk Management and Analytics (PERMA) Joint Administrative Operations, FWS, Hadley, MA**

Both of my parents were born in China and came to the U.S. as college students in the late 1950s. They met in Southern California and still live there today.

Prior to DOI, I worked at the U.S. Peace Corps headquarters office and as a program examiner at the Office of Management and Budget in the International Affairs/Economics Branch. I also taught English as a second language and social studies at a high school in Washington, DC and I served two stints as a Peace Corps Volunteer - first in Sierra Leone as a health extension worker, and then in Botswana as an English teacher.

My mother's youngest brother was a rare Asian-American ranger for the National Park Service and a superintendent for California State Parks. When I was a pre-teen and teenager, my uncle took me and my two brothers on yearly deep-country backpacking trips in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. He exposed me to natural wonders, imparted grit, and demonstrated the possibilities of being a civil servant.





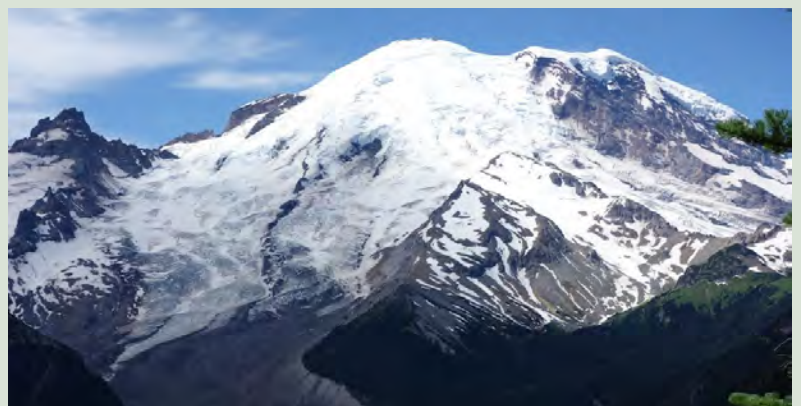


### Jeni Chan, Physical Science Technician, NPS North Cascades, WA

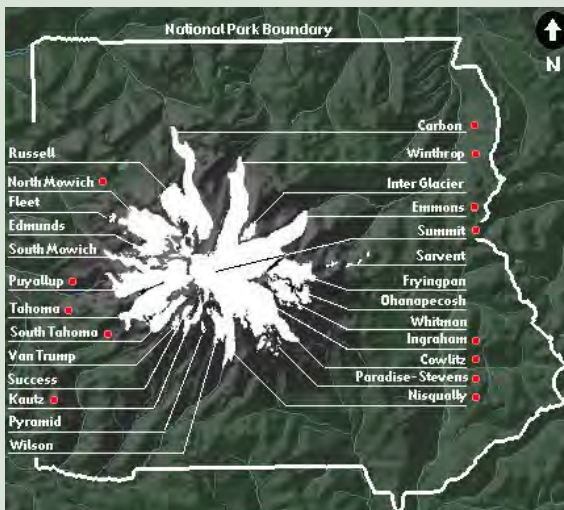
My name is Jeni Chan and I work for North Cascades National Park Service. I started as a wilderness ranger, but I am currently employed as a physical science technician under the supervision of respected hydrologists and geologists. I reside in Marblemount, Washington.

This job has been incredibly important to me, not only for the opportunity to take part in geomorphological science, but for the representation of Asian American women. Although my heritage is important, I identify stronger with those who prioritize the sanctity of the mountains. This provides for me an opportunity with the National Park Service to participate in a change within my own culture where women are expected to look, behave, and dress a certain way. It also allows me to engage in disarming demeaning societal stereotypes of Asian women—that we are both docile and subordinate.

In my wilderness days, I have positively influenced young Asian girls to break tradition and aspire towards a career in the mountains. In my physical science position, I hope to inspire young Asian girls to pursue a path that equalizes them in the eyes of men.



*Pictured, above left: Jeni Chan measuring and collecting stakes on the lower Emmons Glacier on Mount Rainier, September 2020. Glaciers are important indicators of climatic change and essential sources of water, supporting five major river systems. The Emmons Glacier has the largest area (4.3 square miles) of all glaciers in the contiguous 48 states. Above: Mount Rainier's summit and the start of the Emmons Glacier. Photo by NPS.*



*Pictured, left: The [Mount Rainier interactive Atlas of Glaciers](#) has additional information on the park's 25 glaciers.*





**Barbara Green, Equal Opportunity Manager, NPS Anchorage, AK**

From [Mount Rainier](#), [Mount Rushmore](#) and [Denali](#), to [Boston National Historical Park](#), my family and I appreciate the rich history, beauty and splendor of our parks and enjoy exploring them. It is a pleasure working for NPS since I value their mission.

My mother started a family tradition I have always loved and passed onto my children. We feast on Korean cuisine, along with traditional American fare, during the holidays. On Thanksgiving, we will indulge in turkey with all the trimmings, along with **bulgogi** (marinated meat), **kimchee** (salted and fermented vegetables), **yaki mandu** (fried dumplings), **chap chae** (glass noodles with beef and vegetables) and **songpyeon** (rice cakes). **Jeongmal masisseo** (really delicious)!

*Pictured, left to right: Dael Devenport, Andrew Gertge, Barbara Green, Sierra Willoughby and Kelly Chang participating in a Pride event in 2019. Below: Barbara works the NPS kiosk at the Pride Festival.*







**Justin Yee, Outdoor Recreation Planner,  
NPS Santa Monica Mountains  
Recreation Area, Thousand Oaks, CA**

I have had a meaningful career with the NPS all while living in Los Angeles. In 2014, I began with the NPS as a Pathways college intern conducting vegetation surveys and removing invasive weeds. After graduating, I accepted a position with the park to develop a native plant nursery and volunteer operation in partnership with [Audubon Center at Debs Park](#). I also led various youth development projects providing job experience, training, and mentorship while partnering with local NGOs. Working in resource management and outreach in Los Angeles led to a position with the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, where I coordinated a network of federal and local agencies, NGOs, and academia.

Now, I serve as an outdoor recreation planner working with the Superintendent's office to organize management activities and to serve as lands resources liaison assisting with acquisition and rights of way. The people that I have met along the way have helped form the person I am and made this career worthwhile. Living and working in Los Angeles reminds me of the importance of connecting our public lands with the diverse communities making up this country.

My favorite food is my mom's *sinigang* soup and I love going to dim sum restaurants with family and friends.



**The Audubon Center at Debs Park**

The Center's mission is to inspire people to experience, understand and care for the local natural world. In addition to restoring habitat for bird and other wildlife at Debs Park and along the L.A. River, the Center's primary goal is restoring the connection between people and the land in Los Angeles.

As the first center that the Audubon Society built within an urban environment to specifically engage the Latino community, the Audubon Center has played an important role in building a more diverse and inclusive conservation movement in Los Angeles and beyond. Photo NPS.

**[Kids: Check out some of the Audubon Center's favorite tips and tricks for birding in your own backyard!](#)**





*Left: Screen capture of the AAPI roundtable discussion led by Secretary Haaland last month. Kelly is pictured, upper right.*

**Kelly Kim, Human Capital Communications Analyst, DOI Office of Human Capital, Washington, D.C.**

After years of nonprofit and local government work in Southern California where I grew up, this Korean American woman’s career took her across the country to begin her federal career as an AmeriCorps Fellow with the DOI Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) in 2011. I spent the first few months in Appalachian coal country prior to assuming my position in Washington, DC. OSMRE and coal country were far from my interests at the time, but my six years with the bureau turned out to be some of the most transformative years of my life, personally and professionally. In 2017, I joined the DOI Office of Human Capital (OHC) where I currently support employee engagement, inform our workforce about OHC’s policies and programs, and work to make DOI the Best Place to Work!

My favorite family tradition is New Year’s Day. Every January 1, we gather to make huge vats of **dduk guk** (rice cake soup), a traditional New Year dish, and sing Happy Birthday to my aunt whose birthday shares the same day. After our bellies are full of comforting soup and conversations, we participate in **sebae**, the ritual of bowing to elders and, in return, they share their wishes and blessings for us in the New Year. The celebration continues with several rounds of **yutnori**, a Korean board game similar to the Sorry board game. In my family, yutnori is a serious and rowdy competition complete with handmade

boards, a championship trophy, and a nice cash prize for the winners. We end the night exhausted and exhilarated from food coma and the intense rounds of yutnori, ready to take on the New Year.

**Saehae bok mani badeuseyo** (Happy New Year)!



*Pictured, above: Kelly speaking at an event of the [Federal Asian Pacific American Council](#) in 2017. FAPAC, founded in 1985, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the civilian and military Asian Pacific American employees in the Federal and District of Columbia governments.*





### Robert Hoang Pos, Fishery Biologist, USFWS Falls Church, VA

I am Hoang Xuan Khanh, also known as Robert (Bob) Pos, and I emigrated from South Vietnam to Western Massachusetts in 1970 and graduated from UMASS – Amherst with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology after failing miserably to become a civil engineer. Spending too much time drifting down the Connecticut River catching smallmouth bass and sloshing through streams fishing for brook trout probably did not help.

But after over 30 years in Fisheries, I still say I don't have any regrets. I am very passionate about representing Fisheries and the Service in outreach and education programs and events and I have leveraged my own personal experience to champion various diversity initiatives. I try to engage youth at the lowest level with recreationally oriented activities that provide hands-on learning experiences, which is critically needed to foster and develop an early appreciation for nature in today's youth. I hope through my efforts at connecting people with nature, the Service is able to promote greater opportunities for future careers in conservation and natural resource management.

My family and I spent a lot of time fishing on the banks of the Deerfield River near Stillwater Bridge. We caught these big, silver fishes in the spring on nightcrawlers and it wasn't until I became a biologist that I learned that they were White Suckers (*Catostomus commersonii*).

It was all fun back then.



## Opportunity is Calling!

Discover for yourself what tens of thousands of volunteers have learned: volunteering at a national wildlife refuge, fish hatchery or other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service site is fun and rewarding in many ways. Master new skills. Meet new friends. Enjoy a sense of accomplishment from doing your part to further wildlife conservation for the pleasure of generations to follow.

Explore opportunities at [volunteer.gov](https://www.volunteer.gov).





**Lena Chang, Fish and Wildlife Biologist and Information Coordinator, USFWS COVID-19 Sustained Response Team, Ventura, CA**

I was one of those kids who needed to find myself, and I spent many years after high school working various jobs, eventually finding fulfillment working with children in special education programs in public schools. During that time, I began volunteering for a wildlife rehabilitation center, specializing in birds of prey. Nearly every bird we received was impacted in some way by humans and the human environment. I found it heartbreaking, and after enough time, realized that one bird at a time was not going to cut it for me. I wanted to do more.

Inspired by the power of the [Endangered Species Act](#), which brought the bald eagle and peregrine falcon back from near extinction, I pursued college in my 20s to earn a degree in environmental biology with the specific goal of working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I could not be prouder to be working for Interior, protecting the lands and species that I love, and working alongside the wonderful people who followed their own paths toward careers in conservation.

My parents were the first to introduce me to Interior lands; my best childhood memories are of time spent on public lands and in National Parks. I grew up camping and fishing, running around the giant redwoods and enjoying the vast expanses of the [San Bernardino](#) and [Sierra Nevada](#) mountains. It gave me a deep appreciation of how conservation of wild places and species can profoundly enrich our lives.



***Pictured, upper right: Lena with a miniscule American spadefoot toad. Right: Lena with her USFWS team in 2017. Photos USFWS***





**Rebecca Au, Volunteer & Youth Programs  
Coordinator, NPS San Francisco, CA**

I first started working at the National Park Service at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 2019, right before the pandemic. I was a former assistant to the Internship manager for the Park's Friend's group the [Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy](#) (GGNPC) and transitioned over to the National Park Service as my term was ending at the GGNPC. In the past year and a half, I've enjoyed being in service to the public as well as to my colleagues. I am privileged to be in a unique role where I can lead service projects to inspire the public to help steward our parklands as well as helping enrich and enhance all our youth programs at the park.

Growing up in an immigrant family that has a history of migration to escape wars has taught me that struggling can also mean strength. My parents grew up in Vietnam and so

parcs took on a different meaning for them: that parks can generally be a place that is unknown, wild, and sometimes dangerous. My family and I have also been estranged for most of my adult life and the few family members that are still in touch with me on a regular basis are my mother and two sisters. Therefore, distant memories of family traditions are mostly set in a different cultural backdrop than my career trajectory. However, I've been using my current experience to help shape future memories with my family and parks. Since taking my mother and sister to more parks in the U.S. they have found courage to go out more by themselves and enjoy recreating outside. My mom has still never been to a National Park, and I am determined to be the first one to show her how magical it can be!

***Above and on the cover: Rebecca in her neighborhood in San Francisco conducting an outreach on a virtual service learning program about Monarch Butterflies on Earth Day 2020. Photo NPS***





## New York City Public Art Project Takes On Anti-Asian Racism

By Barbara Yau, [AsAmNews](#) Staff Writer

[\(Read the full article here\)](#)

A New York City artist is addressing anti-Asian racism in the most bold and vibrant fashion, and she is displaying her art where people won't miss it — in the middle of a busy subway station in Brooklyn. Featuring portraits of Asian people and statements such as “I Am Not Your Scapegoat” and “This Is Our Home Too,” this public art series will

include 45 unique pieces created by [Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya](#), a former neuroscientist who is presently an artist in residence with the New York City Commission of Human Rights.

The “**I Still Believe in our City**” art series, created in response to the surge in coronavirus-related racism across the country, also includes portraits that support Black Lives Matter.



Top and left: installations of the artist's work in New York City.  
Above: . Photos AsAmNews.





“This isn’t an anti-hate campaign or a public service announcement. It’s more than that. This is a celebration of everything Asian American people contribute to New York City, from working the frontlines as essential workers to building coalitions with the Black Lives Matter movement. I wanted to find a way to say, despite everything we have faced as Asian Americans and New Yorkers, that I still believe in New York. I still believe in our city.”

- Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya





# ★ VETERAN SPOTLIGHT ★



## Lt. Col. Stephen Taitano

Stephen Taitano serves as Administrative Officer at the Bureau of Land Management's Arizona State Office in Phoenix. In this role, he serves as a member of the State Leadership Team, leading a team of professionals responsible for contracting and procurement; grants and agreements; facilities, fleet, and property management; purchase card management; mail services and more. Stephen is a U.S. Army Reserve officer who is currently serving as the West Region Officer in Charge with the Defense Contracting Management Agency's Army Reserve Element. During his 25-year military career, he has served in a variety of contracting, engineering, training and recruiting assignments, including deployments to Bagram, Afghanistan and Baghdad, Iraq.

A native Chamorro, Stephen grew up on the beautiful island of Guam and continues the island's proud tradition of military and public service.



## Sgt. Sofronio C. Propios III

Branch: US Army

Rank: Staff Sergeant E-6

Years Served: 1993-2003

Locations Served: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Currently: Remote Sensing Scientist, USGS Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center, Sioux Falls SD

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The DOI Veterans Resource Group is here for you. Please reach out to [doi\\_vets@ios.doi.gov](mailto:doi_vets@ios.doi.gov)





Spices and herbs are defined as plant-derived substances that add flavor to any dish. It is difficult to distinguish between the two. Spices can come from the following plant parts: roots, rhizomes, stems, leaves, bark, flowers, fruits, and seeds. Herbs are typically thought of as non-woody plants. It is not known when humans began to use the first herbs and spices as flavoring agents. Garlic and onions were documented as being used 4,500 years ago. Humans used spices to help preserve foods before refrigeration. Both were also used in religious ceremonies.

Spices and herbs have historical importance and were once the source of great power and wealth. Many Asian and Pacific Island cultures built their diets around the availability of certain herbs and spices. Cinnamon from Sri Lanka, hawaj from Yemen, curry from India, shichimi togarashi from Japan, galangal from Indonesia, Baharat from Lebanon, garam masala from India, shiso from Kyoto Prefecture Japan, sansho pepper from Japan, and Sichuan pepper from China are just a few of the flavors of Asia.

Explore Asian herbs and spices here:

<https://www.tasteatlas.com/asia/herbs-and-spices>

## Answer Key from Page Four

COUNTRY	CAPITOL	COUNTRY	CAPITOL
Afghanistan	Kabul	Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar
Armenia	Yerevan	Myanmar	Naypyidaw
Azerbaijan	Baku	Nepal	Kathmandu
Bahrain	Manama	North Korea	Pyongyang
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Oman	Muscat
Bhutan	Thimphu	Pakistan	Islamabad
Brunei	Bandar Seri Begawan	Palestine	Jerusalem (East)
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Philippines	Manila
China	Beijing	Qatar	Doha
Cyprus	Nicosia	Russia	Moscow
Georgia	Tbilisi	Saudi Arabia	Riyadh
India	New Delhi	Singapore	Singapore
Indonesia	Jakarta	South Korea	Seoul
Iran	Tehran	Sri Lanka	Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
Iraq	Baghdad	Syria	Damascus
Israel	Jerusalem	Taiwan	Taipei
Japan	Tokyo	Tajikistan	Dushanbe
Jordan	Amman	Thailand	Bangkok
Kazakhstan	Nur-Sultan	Timor-Leste	Dili
Kuwait	Kuwait City	Turkey	Ankara
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	Turkmenistan	Ashgabat
Laos	Vientiane	UAE	Abu Dhabi
Lebanon	Beirut	Uzbekistan	Tashkent
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	Vietnam	Hanoi
Maldives	Male	Yemen	Sana'a



Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) are implemented and observed throughout the Department of the Interior primarily to ensure that all are provided an equal opportunity in all aspects of employment. These programs help DOI improve its employee engagement efforts and fosters an environment where all employees are respected, valued, accepted, appreciated and feel included.

## SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM TEAM



The Administrative Services Special Emphasis Program Team, in collaboration with the DOI Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, publishes **Connections** magazine to coincide with each monthly commemoration.

*We would be delighted to have you help us with our efforts by:*

- *Shaping subject matter for each magazine*
- *Creating and submitting content*
- *Participating in and hosting virtual observances and informal discussions*
- *Celebrating diversity with family, friends and co-workers*

Team members spend approximately two hours per month on SEP initiatives, are able to take time away when work schedules require it, and can focus on those subject areas that are most meaningful to them. To get started, please contact program coordinator Stephen Carlisle at [Stephen\\_Carlisle@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:Stephen_Carlisle@ibc.doi.gov). Thank you!

## Connections Magazine for June: LGBTQIA+ Pride Month

*The Special Emphasis Program Magazine is a monthly publication of the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Administrative Services, in collaboration with the Director, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights. Your input is essential to making this a valuable resource for all employees.*

*Please feel free to share your ideas, suggestions and articles/pictures with editor Stephen Carlisle at [Stephen\\_Carlisle@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:Stephen_Carlisle@ibc.doi.gov). Thanks!*

*The views and conclusions contained in this work are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.*

*Pictured, right: The Names Project Memorial AIDS Quilt on Washington Mall. Photo NPS.*

