

ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION MONTFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

AN ARTICLE BY THAYUMANASAMY SOMASUNDARAM DATED THURSDAY, MAY 03, 2012

One of the many advantages of living in Tallahassee is the diversity of people one sees every day at work, school, and outdoors. This, of course, is not a coincidence. Even though Tallahassee is relatively a small city, it attracts people from all over the state and country due to the presence of state government, universities, and business centers. Asians and Asian Pacific Americans represent one segment of this diversity. Even though they represent 2.4% of the total population of the Sunshine State, according to 2010 Census, they are the fastest growing minority group. This growth can be seen in our schools, colleges, business, and professional services.

Asian Coalition of Tallahassee (ACT | www.asiantlh.org) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit umbrella organization with over dozen member associations and organizations representing Asian and Asian-Pacific countries. It was established in 2004 to allow Asian and Asian-Pacific Americans to get together, showcase the talents of its members, and share their rich culture and heritage with others. ACT also wants to establish a long standing connection to the local community the Association members now call home. Since 1978 when President Carter signed a US House and Senate joint resolution declaring May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, communities throughout the US have been observing it in various ways. In keeping with this tradition, ACT has been celebrating Asian American Heritage Month for several years.

This year ACT has partnered with Leon County Schools and the celebrations will be held at two different middle schools on two different evenings. The first event was held at Montford Middle School Cafeteria on Thursday, May 03, 2012 between 6:00 and 8:30 PM. The Montford event featured the following groups as performers and exhibitors:

- FSU AASU
- Firestorm
- Mabuhay Youth Dance Company
- Chinese Association of Tallahassee
- India Association of Tallahassee
- Bigbend Filipino American Assoc
- Japanese Community
- Thai Community
- TCC Dance Company
- Tenshien Shoden Martial Arts
- Folkloric Filipiniana
- Arnis De Mano/Kali
- PGE Entertainment
- Tallahassee Rugao Sister city
- Asian Coalition of Tallahassee

There were opportunities to engage in hands-on activities for children and adults. Representatives from various Asian countries were there to answer questions about their culture and heritage. The admission to the events was free and was open to public. Asian food from Azu local Japanese restaurant and Samrat local Indian restaurant was available for purchase.

To learn more information about this and future events, please visit ACT's website www.asiantlh.org or contact Thayumana **Somasundaram** (somabhanu@gmail.com), or Aurora Hansen, or Clyde Diao.



Members of Asian Coalition of Tallahassee participate in the Parade of Nations during the 2012 Asian American Heritage Month Celebration at Montford Middle School. *Photo: Thayumanasamy Somasundaram*



Members of Folklorico Filipino participate during the 2012 Asian American Heritage Month Celebration at Montford Middle School. *Photo: Thayumanasamy Somasundaram*



Superintendent Pons speaking to a Leon County High school student during the program. *Photo: Thayumanasamy Somasundaram*



Montford Principal Mr Cook and Asst Principal Mrs Reilly during the program. *Photo: Thayumanasamy Somasundaram*

www.somasundaram.name/publications/12aahmc-mm-01.pdf