

# NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON RACIAL & ETHNIC DIVERSITY

NCORED Network News WITH A VOICE FROM...

American Indian Caucus

Asian Pacific Islander Caucus

Black Caucus

Latino Caucus

## MAY – CELEBRATE ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE

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*The content of the articles are the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the National Association of Social Workers.*

## NCORED: SOCIAL WORK MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

*By Gary Bailey, President*

In the late 1980s I took my first trip to the NASW headquarters, which was then located in Silver Spring, Maryland, to meet with Luisa Lopez and a group of volunteers to discuss what was happening in Boston, Massachusetts, in the area of racial and ethnic diversity, specifically as it related to our Committee on Ethnic and Racial Affairs, affectionately known as CERA.

Over twenty years later, I am happy to say that CERA (Massachusetts Chapter) is alive and well. I am also pleased that the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED) is very active and producing vital, cutting edge information and materials for our members.

In May 2005, I attended the Ohio Annual Statewide HIV Care Conference in Columbus, OH, as their keynote presenter. I also did a workshop using the *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* to a packed audience. Metaphorically, all members of NCORED past and present who helped to develop these Standards were there with me just as they were a few weeks later when the Standards were discussed at the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Social Workers.

As I complete my term as President of NASW, I reflect on that first trip that I made to the national office in Silver Spring as a young social worker and the discussions I had regarding social inclusion and I am committed more than ever to ensuring that the voice of racial and ethnic minorities are recognized, heard and respected.

*For synopses of President Bailey's references to human rights, social justice, racial and ethnic diversity issues please refer to his columns in the NASW News. ■*



Office of Human Rights & Internatioanl Affairs  
 750 First Street NE • Suite 700 • Washington, D.C. 20002-4241  
 202.408.8600 • [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)

## **MARISSA NUVAYESTEWA RECEIVES CONSUELO W. GOSNELL MEMORIAL MSW SCHOLARSHIP**

The National Association of Social Workers Foundation (NASWF) awards annual fellowships and scholarships to outstanding NASW students. (Information about these awards is located on the NASWF Web site at: [www.naswfoundation.org](http://www.naswfoundation.org).) Among these awards is the Consuelo W. Gosnell Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to master's degree candidates in social work who have demonstrated a commitment to working with—or who have a special affinity with—American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic/Latino populations, or in public and voluntary nonprofit agency settings. This year, Marissa Nuvayestewa was the proud recipient of the Consuelo W. Gosnell Memorial Scholarship.

Marissa Nuvayestewa, an MSW student at Washington University in St Louis, is a Hopi and Tewa Indian from the Hopi Reservation in Arizona who has seen, firsthand, what oppression does to indigenous people. Committed to serving the Native American population, Marissa would like to return to the Hopi Indian Reservation in Arizona, where she plans on addressing the needs of her community. She plans to be active in the political area, empowering the tribal community through social change efforts, starting with the tribal government and ending with the federal government.

## **MESSAGE FROM NASW API CAUCUS CHAIRPERSON**

*Sharlene B.C. Furuto, MSW, EdD*

Aloha from Hawaii. Thank you to those of you who responded to my e-mail request for articles for this newsletter. The invitation resulted in diverse and fascinating articles about ethnicity, health disparities, and saving the Hula Hula in the Arctic.

I also communicated several times with members regarding topics such as: the social work education conference in China in 2005; upcoming trips to India and Paris (we'll hear from a member who traveled abroad in the next newsletter); transitioning from one job to another; feeling left out at NASW chapter meetings; and being in a non-traditional professional

position. Additionally, a graduate student assures me she'll stay with NASW when she graduates; a Pacific Islander member encourages us to “recognize and celebrate cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial diversity;” and another member is wondering what issues will require our attention at the 2005 Delegate Assembly. If you are interested in networking with any of the above individuals, please e-mail me and I'll provide the link. Meanwhile, you can connect with your API colleagues by reading the following articles, and by considering what *you* would like to share with us next time.

If you have a special interest, and would like to network with other APIs regarding a particular topic, send me an e-mail. There is a network of some 1,500 individuals focusing on API issues. I will be happy to add you to that listserv.

*Sharlene B.C. Furuto, MSW, EdD, is chair of the API Caucus and professor in the Social Work Program at Brigham Young University-Hawaii. She can be contacted at: [furutos@byuh.edu](mailto:furutos@byuh.edu)* ■

## **MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE WITH ASIAN INDIAN IMMIGRANTS: CLARION CALL FOR SOCIAL WORKERS**

*By Monica Nandan, PhD, MSW, MBA*

During the past decade, social workers have had to become more culturally sensitive and competent to effectively respond to the increasing diversity in America, particularly the growth in immigrants and the elderly population. The older adult population (over age 65) was expected to grow from 13 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2050 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1995). Additionally, immigrants from Asia have continued to outnumber immigrants from Europe, particularly in the second half of the 20th century. According to the 2000 Census, Asian Indians (AIs) over age 55 are the fourth largest Asian and Pacific Islander group (API), with Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese in the first three places, respectively.

Three distinct waves of AIs have migrated to the United States since 1965, when an immigration law deterring Asians from migrating to the United States was repealed. As each wave ages on U.S. soil, it is experiencing the challenges of, and adaptation to, American culture differently. This article provides exploratory hypotheses pertaining to their experiences and adaptation to American culture for social

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workers working with the Asian Indian Elderly (AIE) population, based on when, why, and from where the latter migrated to the United States.

The first wave of AI immigrants arrived in the mid to late 1960s, in order to pursue rapid career enhancement as professionals. As doctors, lawyers, academics, and engineers, these immigrants fared well financially; almost all are U.S. citizens today, except those who chose to retain their permanent residency status (green card). They possess a sound understanding of the American culture, and have adapted to the materialistic values and some social elements of the American culture. Today, they are in their 50s and 60s—retirement or pre-retirement age.

The second wave of AI immigrants immigrated in the 1970s and 80s for reasons similar to the first wave, but more of these immigrants migrated with well-educated wives who were working outside the home. Some AIs also arrived from other parts of the globe because they were trying to escape political and religious persecution (e.g., Guyana), or because of the economic situation in their home countries (e.g., South Africa). These immigrants are in their 40s and 50s today.

Similar to the first wave of immigrants, most of these AIs are U.S. citizens, although some continue to maintain permanent residency status. This wave of immigrants has moderately adapted to materialistic values and some social dimensions of American culture. Diaspora AIE have probably adapted to more dimensions of American life than those who migrated from India directly.

The first two waves of immigrants migrated from a culture where filial piety, interdependence across generations, reverence for the elderly, regard for characteristics of old age (such as maturity and wisdom), and spiritual salvation were ingrained in children at very young ages. Even Diaspora Indians experienced some of these values in their countries of origin.

The third wave of immigration peaked in the 1990s because of the Family Reunification Act of 1990. Many AIs who lived in the United States for an extended period of time successfully sponsored their parents to the United States during the 1990s. This occurred for a multitude of reasons, ranging from an absence of close family members to address the needs

of aging parents in India, to a requirement for a helping hand in the domestic work of the adult child in the United States. Some of these immigrants may not be eligible for citizenship yet, while others may have become citizens. Older adults migrating from India in the 1990s had a higher level of awareness of American culture than did the immigrants in the first two waves.

Adaptation experiences of AIEs are mixed. On one hand, those who migrated directly from India when they had entered the prime of their lives are experiencing more health problems and corresponding financial stress in the United States. They are also experiencing more strife between American and Indian values. On the other hand, those who migrated to the states with a high percentage of AIs may have easy access to Indian communities and culture. This could assist them in feeling more comfortable in the United States, but may have discouraged them from adapting to American society.

India ceased its nationalist sentiment in the 1990s when numerous multinationals opened offices in India. Pharmaceuticals and computer technology blossomed under the new political regime. This phenomenon increased the level of western influence in India, though most of the basic values pertaining to the elderly population remain unchanged.

### **Implications for Social Workers**

As the number of AIs over the age of 55 continues to grow in the United States, social service providers can proactively prepare themselves for the unmet needs of this population segment. Social workers, as they assess the needs of the aging population as well as of the caregivers, should be aware of the nuances of the different waves of AI immigrants. They must recognize the many similarities across the waves; for example, the desire to hold on to some elements of Indian culture. Social workers can approach the various generations of AIs more effectively and sensitively by participating in AI social and religious events, and by appropriately utilizing indigenous helpers and priests from within the AI community. Through community organizing and creating opportunities for AIEs to gather socially to talk or eat ethnic foods, social workers can increase their own knowledge and awareness of this community.

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Monica Nandan, PhD, MSW, MBA, is associate professor of social work and coordinator of the Gerontology Program at Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, MO. ■

## SAVING THE HULA HULA ARCTIC BIRTHLANDS

By Renee H. Furuyama, MSW, LSW, MURP

The Bush Administration has given many social workers the impetus to exercise their community organizing skills. For example, Jane Thompson, a social worker, is an Inupiat Eskimo who lives in Alaska. She is traveling with her husband, Robert, an Inupiat Eskimo guide; Subhankar Banerjee, a renowned photographer of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and Sandra Newman, a Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. This group stopped in Hawaii on February 25, 2004, as part of their national speaking tour to prevent oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Jane and Robert live on the Alaskan North Slope where oil is being drilled from Prudhoe Bay. The Inupiat have not fared well from oil drilling. Reports dating as far back as 1987 state that wildlife

populations, especially female caribou, were reduced and displaced from their previous calving habitats; traditional subsistence hunting areas have been reduced; the behavior and migratory patterns of key subsistence species have changed; and there is an increased incidence of cancer and diabetes, as well as disruptions of social systems, among the native population.

The oil companies employ few Inupiat, who are given menial or token jobs, and make up a small minority in a predominantly white workforce that sometimes expresses hostility toward Alaskan Natives. Since 1996, the oil fields have produced an average of 400 spills annually on the North Slope. These spills affect all marine life, including whales; the nesting of migratory birds from around the world; and the day-to-day lives and health of the Inupiat. Given these findings, Jane and Robert are fighting to preserve the Arctic Refuge from imminent oil drilling.

The Vuntut Gwitchin are a first nations people who live in the northernmost community of Old Crow, located 80 miles north of the Arctic Circle, at the confluence of the Crow and Porcupine Rivers in Canada's Yukon Territory. The Vuntut Gwitchin is one population of 19 communities spread out across Alaska and the Yukon Territories. These 19 communities of more than 7,500 individuals form a nation of people: the Gwitchin Nation. The Porcupine caribou are the center of Gwitchin culture, as Gwitchin villages depend on the caribou for food, clothing, and various crafts. The caribou calving grounds are sacred—Gwitchin people never go there. Now, the Bush Administration wants to drill for oil in that area as well as other parts of the refuge, known as the Hula Hula Arctic Birthlands. Projections show that if oil is found, there will only be a six months' worth supply; however, we can imagine the long-term damages that will be incurred. This is not just an environmental issue; *it is now a human rights issue.*

As far as Hawaii is from Alaska, to hear native speakers talk about their love for their land and for their people brings about an immediate bond that can transcend distance, language, and culture. Not only does Hawaii have several shoreline birds that migrate every summer to Alaska to nest or feed; not only do our whales migrate to Alaska every summer; not only do we share the same ocean and breathe the same air—we also share many similar struggles.

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Native Hawaiians (Kanaka Maoli) are struggling for self-determination and sovereignty. The Bush Administration poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Hawaii to increase U.S. military presence and weapons in the state. Military weapons trainings have devastated beautiful and cultural areas of our state where land is already limited. For generations to come, people will be prohibited from entering these areas, due to the dangers from unexploded ordinances.

In her short visit, Sandra Newman could see our problems. She stated, “As I stood on Punchbowl and looked down on Honolulu, I could sense the earth weeping. Although Hawaii is a beautiful place, the earth cannot provide for the amount of people you have here, *and* all of the tourists. I would like to say that I would like to come back again, but out of respect for the land, I’m *not* coming back again.” Yes, Sandra, the Kanaka Maoli have been displaced, and continue to be displaced. All of us, social workers and non-social workers, have to make a true commitment to work together to fight against further degradation of our land, and for the restoration of environmental and human rights.

*Renee H. Furuyama, MSW, LSW, MURP, is a retired licensed social worker with a master’s degree in social work and a master’s degree in urban and regional planning. ■*

## **SPIRITUALITY: A COMPONENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

*By Mabel Gilbert Wells, PhD, ACSW*

Spirituality has been an integral part of social work since its inception; until recently, though, the term itself was rarely used. As we are reminded by Woods and Hollis (2000), “Too often we come up with what we believe is a new perspective on theory or practice, only to find that it is an old idea (even if expressed in new terms or language)” (p. 71). Our older literature reminds us that the dimension of spirituality has been with us all along, and that we are now merely recovering and defining an essential provision: the affirmation and support of the spiritual needs of the people we serve.

## **SPIRITUALITY AS AN ASSESSMENT COMPONENT**

Spirituality and religion are integral aspects of competent social work assessment and practice, because they are sources of meaning, values, life-direction, and substantive emotional and physical resources. Social workers must not shy away from discussions concerning religion, as religion often provides the basis for one’s spiritual integrity and identifies a centering force. For some people, trust in a higher power provides freedom from fear; this trust might be expressed as faith and commitment to religious beliefs. Fear is a formidable emotion, against which comes some of the more debilitating mental health problems faced by our clients. We know about the defense mechanisms used to combat fear and other unsettling emotions, but helping professionals need to accept and expand their understanding about the impact of the concept of a “higher power” on mental health issues.

For many, prayer is a coping tool rooted in religion and belief in a higher power. It provides stress-reducing serenity. Therefore, when a social worker says, “I can’t go there. I need to call a chaplain (or minister, or rabbi, or imam),” encouragement is needed for the social worker to realize that the client’s religion is meaningful in a definition of self. The social worker cannot ignore this vital part if appreciation for the meaning in the client’s very being is professed.

In the assessment of a client’s ability to call on coping qualities that help him or her rise above the vagaries of life, the social worker must cultivate the ability to listen to, and tune into, the client’s essence, to listen to the quiet within, and screen out the noises from environmental circumstances, from history, and even from within the helper, which can block out empathic communication. If a client perceives a mutual faith, there might be more willingness to share subjects which, heretofore, could not emerge, for fear of ridicule or judgment.

What kinds of raw impulses do we hear when we communicate our openness to accept a client’s spiritual self? Perhaps there is stress, masked by bravado or too much effort to communicate well-being. Does the client indicate self-reliance, and to what degree? Does dependency appear to dominate, causing blame toward the world for these

circumstances? Of course, self-esteem must be considered: To what degree does the client use the ego to solve problems? What is the basis of the client's reasoning? Sometimes we might perceive that the client has fallen into a "spiritual trap," which manifests as depression. The client might blame him or herself for a wrong or mistake against another, and feel beyond redemption.

### SPIRITUALITY: RELEVANCE TO THE HELPING PROCESS

A deepening of our empathic skills is required to help us listen to clients' perceptions of themselves as spiritual beings, and to help us understand such perceptions. Observations and courageous use of the reflective interview techniques of "clarification" and "interpretation" will help assess clients' attributes and qualities that reveal their spiritual orientation, as well as the potentiality of such orientation to influence the helping process. Some considerations are:

1. Does the client assume responsibility for problem solving, or is someone or something else responsible?
2. Does the client expect to be rewarded for righteousness? Is there bitterness and despair when trials come despite righteous living? Or is there acceptance and sanguinity?
3. Is the client accepting or unforgiving of imperfection in others?
4. Does the client expect to meet everyone's needs, and is there despair when others fail to sense his or her own needs? Or, can the client overcome personal disappointments and shortcomings?
5. Is the client able to respect his or her own personal qualities and talents, or is the client caught up in measurement of self as compared to others?
6. Is there belief and trust in a supreme being or higher power? Is such power viewed as loving and giving, or vengeful and punishing?

Furthermore, depending on tried and true reflective techniques, the social worker can discern the client's attributes and attitudes, which can help determine the extent to which his or her spiritual qualities might lend strength to—or retard—the healing process.

Some attributes that might be assessed are:

1. Altruistic qualities, generosity, compassion, empathy, sensitivity, respect for others

2. Assertiveness, self-confidence and value placed on the self, ability to define a purpose in life or conceive a quest for a higher purpose
3. Desire or willingness to discuss non-tangible subjects, such as mood (happiness, satisfaction, sadness, disappointment), life expectations, religious faith, values, strengths, value conflicts which cause inner struggles or thwart inner peace
4. Cultural aspects of one's thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors
5. Social connectedness to friends, family, and community; basis for stability
6. Evidence of regeneration of spirit through inner resiliency, rather than from outside sources

Curriculum- and practice-based interest in spirituality is two-pronged: (1) the client's perception of self as a spiritual being, and (2) the relevance of spirituality to the helping plan and process. Inclusion of the spiritual element is a testament to the sensitivity and ethical responsiveness of the professional, in his or her quest for ever expanding ways to help people improve their quality of life. It is a critical element in competent social work practice.

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Mabel Gilbert Wells, PhD, ACSW, is associate professor emerita at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. ■

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## HOW TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN SOCIAL WORKERS

By *Sonia Palacio-Grottola, QCSW, ACSW-R*

As documented in the United States census, the Latino population has grown to the extent that it is now the largest minority group, surpassing the African American population. Unfortunately, society has not sufficiently planned to address the problems of this growing population. One of the concerns that needs to be addressed is the lack of bilingual, bicultural social workers to provide professional services to the Hispanic/Latino population. It has been noted, time and again, that not having a bilingual, bicultural professional can lead to misdiagnosis and inappropriate medication management.

Several recommendations need to be considered to address the shortage of these specialized social workers. Universities should be able to recruit a larger pool of students by providing scholarships, stipends, fellowships, and career recruitment, beginning at the junior high school level. Tuition forgiveness could also be an incentive for social workers to complete their Master's level studies in this discipline, and then work in an area (rural or inner city) where a need is documented. Tuition forgiveness is a priority of the Latino Caucus, which is comprised of the National Association of Social Workers, the New York City and New York State NASW chapters, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) #1199. Bills are being drafted in both houses of the New York State Legislature in order to provide tuition forgiveness to increase the pool of social workers. This model should be duplicated in other states.

Another concern is the inability of agencies to attract and retain bilingual social workers. These agencies often make the mistake of hiring one social worker who is bilingual and bicultural to provide services to the Latino population, making the social worker feel like a "token employee." This isolation often produces a hostile environment, which inevitably forces the worker to seek other employment. This is true of many school districts and agencies in

suburban and rural areas. These workers are asked to provide counseling and to interpret for all clients with limited English proficiency. They are doing double duty, and not getting adequate compensation for their efforts. Many workers claim they are "burned out" by a heavy load, and subsequently leave their positions.

When an agency has several bilingual, bicultural workers, they can provide support for each other and celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and other Latino cultural days, which in turn make the clients feel safe, comfortable, and respected due to a cultural, holistic approach. At the same time, these professional bilingual workers can be seen as role models.

The National Association of Puerto Rican Hispanic Social Workers, Inc. (NAPRHSW) was formed in 1983 out of a need to address the critical issues of the lack of bilingual, bicultural social workers in the counties' Child Protective Bureau and in mental health settings. As a membership association, we lobby and advocate for funding, parathetic items (in Civil Service titles), and to improve the cultural competency and cultural sensitivity of agencies working with the Latino population. Our mission is to improve the lives of Hispanic/Latino families and mentor and provide scholarships for Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in Master's level social work programs affiliated with our Association. At present, there are three chapters in development—Texas, New York City, and Long Island.

The Association has a pool of professionals who can speak about the cultural issues of the diverse Latino groups. NAPRHSW will continue to advocate for the betterment of the Latino family.

*Sonia Palacio-Grottola, QCSW, ACSW-R, is president of NASW-New York State Chapter, and is also chair of the Latino Caucus. She has a private practice, and works as a consultant for the Suffolk County Department of Health, Early Intervention Program, for immigrant families with limited English proficiency. Sonia can be contacted at [sonia1536@aol.com](mailto:sonia1536@aol.com) ■*

## **NASW NCORED COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP**

**July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005**

Mary Hall, PhD, ACSW, LICSW, chair  
mfhall@email.smith.edu

Iraida V. Carrion, MSW, LCSW  
icarrion@chumal.cas.usf.edu

Claudia Long, PhD, MSW  
cllong@du.edu

Clara Simmons, ACSW, DCSW  
cxs57@po.cwru.edu  
Claras@ameritech.net

Vivian H. Jackson, ACSW, LICSW  
vhj@georgetown.edu  
Vjack10176@aol.com

Susan Yi-Millette, ABD, MSW  
syimillette@wheelock.edu

Sally Alonzo Bell, PhD, LCSW  
sallybell@sbcglobal.net  
bell@apu.edu

## **NASW STAFF**

Luisa López, MSW, manager,  
Human Rights and International Affairs  
llopez@naswdc.org

Leticia Diaz, MS, senior policy associate  
LDiaz@naswdc.org

Rita Webb, MS, senior policy associate  
rwebb@naswdc.org

## **CAUCUS CHAIRS**

American Indian Caucus  
Hilary N. Weaver, PhD  
hweaver@acsu.buffalo.edu

Asian Pacific Islander Caucus  
Sharlene B.C. Furuto, MSW, EdD  
furotos@byuh.edu

Black Caucus Co-Chairs  
Sophia Manning, MSW, LCSW-C  
creative1020@usa.net

Debra O'Neal, ACSW  
Debra.O'Neal@state.de.us

Latino Caucus  
Sonia Palacio-Grottola, ACSW  
sonia1536@aol.com