



Asian American Federation
of New York

Press Release

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Asian American Federation Honors Outstanding Individuals at its 8th Annual Benefit Gala

New York, NY – Tonight, the Asian American Federation of New York will honor two outstanding individuals and one organization for their dedication to the emergency relief and long-term rebuilding efforts of Lower Manhattan after the September 11th tragedy. *The Spirit of Asian America: Rebuilding Our Communities* 8th Annual Benefit Gala was held at The Regent Wall Street and commended the tireless efforts and compassion of this year's honorees. Also honored was William A. Volckhausen, a Federation board member for over 11 years. The Federation celebrated his memory by giving to his family the Community Service Award. The honorees include:

- Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, USA was established in 1966 by Buddhist nun Master Cheng Yen and was an immediate presence following the World Trade Center tragedy. The Tzu Chi Foundation provided volunteer doctors to assist the injured, set-up a 24-hour hotline to help locate loved ones, and supplied food and water to the rescue workers. The Tzu Chi Foundation also established the Tzu Chi September 11th Project that consists of both emergency relief and long-term assistance plans. To date, they have distributed \$1,787,755 and have assisted 3,164 families immediately affected by the 9/11 tragedy with direct funds and aid.
- Tran Dinh Truong, New York hotel owner and former CEO of the Vishipco Line, contributed \$2 million of his personal funds to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. In addition to his generous donation, Mr. Truong provided full, complimentary

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accommodations and lodging to volunteers from various relief agencies during their stay in New York after the September 11th attack. Mr. Truong immigrated to the United States in 1975 and began his hotel business first with the Hotel Opera on the Upper West Side in Manhattan and then his current Hotel Carter in Midtown Manhattan and Hotel Lafayette in Buffalo.

- Andrew Yoon, owner of Variety Café in Midtown since 1996, is the epitome of an undaunted small-business owner in the wake of post-9/11 rebuilding efforts. Despite the attacks at the World Trade Center, Mr. Yoon continued to sign his lease at his new café on Broadway in Lower Manhattan without asking for changes in the lease or for a rent reduction. Mr. Yoon showed great optimism and a deep commitment to rebuilding the economy of Downtown Manhattan. His new café “Variety Café on Broadway” will open in June of this year.
- William A. Volckhausen was a respected and beloved member of the Federation’s board of directors, for 11 years. His devoted leadership and vision were instrumental in the growth and development of the Federation. A native New Yorker, who worked for the equality of all people, Mr. Volckhausen pass away on September 10, 2001. His kindness and selfless service will continue to inspire future generations committed to community empowerment.

“All of our honorees have proven to embody the spirit of Asian America through their efforts in rebuilding our community and our city after the tragedy,” says Cao K. O, executive director of the Federation. “We are thrilled that they are joining us tonight as we commemorate the end of the recovery efforts and begin the process of rebuilding.”

In addition to the distinguished honorees, the gala will draw many of New York City’s preeminent corporate executives, community and civic leaders, elected officials, and celebrities to the gala. Ms. Ann Curry, news anchor for NBC-TV’s The Today Show, will be the Mistress of Ceremonies. Ms. Curry reported extensively from ground zero World Trade Center site after the September 11th attack.

The Asian American Federation of New York also demonstrated the *Spirit of Asian America: Rebuilding Our Communities* in its own active response to the September 11th tragedy. The Federation established the *Asian American Federation WTC Fund* as well as the *Relief, Recovery, and Rebuilding Initiative* in December 2001. This initiative established

coordinated efforts in partnership with the Federation's agencies to connect families of victims to appropriate services, to offer employment assistance to hundreds of dislocated workers, and to assist small businesses in seeking financial relief. In April 2002, the Federation released the groundbreaking report, *Chinatown After September 11th: An Economic Impact Study*.

The Asian American Federation of New York is a not for profit leadership organization that conducts public policy research and advocacy, technical and management assistance, and community grant-making through the Asian American Community Fund. It has a membership of 36 organizations. The proceeds raised at the benefit will be used to support these works and continue to support the needs in the Asian American community.

For more information about the Federation, please visit our website at www.aafny.org.

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