

Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AANHPI) is an annual celebration that recognizes and upholds those of Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander descent. AANHPI Heritage Month celebrates the significant societal and cultural contributions made by their community, commemorating these achievements on a national level. It also acknowledges the immense historical and contemporary struggles they have faced, which are often overlooked, buried and disregarded. Recognizing these struggles brings greater awareness to the resilience and strength of this community in the face of adversity, uplifting their story of triumph and achievement across America.

The effort to officially recognize AANHPI contributions in the United States began in 1977, when New York representative, Frank Horton, proposed the first 10 days of May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. Though this resolution did not pass, the following year, he requested a week in May to be recognized as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. President Jimmy Carter signed this resolution on October 5, 1978. In 1990, Congress expanded the observance from a week to the entire month of May. May was chosen for AANHPI Heritage Month as it commemorates the immigration of the first Japanese people to the United States on May 7, 1843. Additionally, May 10, 1869, marks the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, achieved through significant contributions from Chinese workers. This historic milestone is known as Golden Spike Day, named after the ceremonial 17.6-karat gold final spike that joined the railroad's rails. In April 2021, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month was officially renamed to Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month by President Joe Biden, reflecting a more inclusive recognition of their communities.

Fermilab's own AANHPI community is continuously upheld, celebrated and recognized. The Fermilab Asian Pacific Association (FAPA) is the second largest Laboratory Resource Group at Fermilab, with representation from multiple backgrounds and cultures. In 2009, the Chinese American Society affinity group was led by Norman Ho, a software developer in ITD, while the Drishti affinity group was led by Alpna Shenai, a senior engineer in ETD. Both groups would join to form today's FAPA. Throughout the year, FAPA hosts numerous festivals and events in accordance with AANHPI cultural celebrations, including Lunar New Year, Lantern Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and Diwali Festival. Sudeshna Ganguly, Associate Scientist and Accelerator Directorate at Fermilab, is a proud, dedicated leader of FAPA. She recognizes the immense importance of upholding their community, stating "through our year-long initiatives and events, FAPA builds a supportive environment for Asian and Pacific Islander community members. Our vibrant cultural celebrations highlight the culture of one another. FAPA aims to foster a strong sense of community and empowerment among its members and allies through collaboration and open dialogue." Fermilab continues to support FAPA and its members, as well as its greater AANHPI community.

As part of Fermilab's Inclusion Matters Series recognizing AANHPI Heritage Month, on May 8 from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., the presentation *Processing Cultural Trauma: Intergenerational Effects of the Japanese American Incarceration* by University of Michigan psychology professor Donna Nagata, discusses the long-term impacts of Japanese American incarceration during World War II and the transgenerational impacts on their postwar children and grandchildren. For past AANHPI Heritage Months, Fermilab has hosted Inclusion Matters presentations on the art of Chinese calligraphy and a book discussion by Ken Liu, author of *The Paper Menagerie*, which examines the cultural differences, identity and heritage of a biracial Chinese American boy.

AANHPI Heritage Month serves as an opportunity to acknowledge and honor the AANHPI community's experiences, resilience and enduring impact on the nation's history and society. Through reflection and recognition of these heritage months, Fermilab reaffirms the importance of understanding different communities and cultures, and their accomplishments and the struggles they have faced throughout history.

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