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Title: Honoring twelve of Philadelphia's emerging Asian American leaders: Lan Dinh, Chi-Ser Tran, Neil Makhija, Dr. Esther Hio-Tong Castillo, Stephanie Sun, Anne Ishii, Jennie Nam, Sreymum Sok, Sinta Storms, Thi Lam, Sheila Maddali, and Maia Weintraub for their deep commitment to empowering their communities, and their work in fighting for food sovereignty, dismantling barriers in social services, expanding economic opportunity and justice, investing in community-based arts, advancing representation in sports, and protecting civil rights on the occasion of Asian American and Pacific Islander History Month.

Sponsors: Councilmember Gym, Councilmember Brooks, Councilmember Gauthier, Councilmember Squilla, Councilmember Domb, Councilmember Bass, Councilmember Gilmore Richardson, Councilmember Oh, Councilmember Green

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Attachments: 1. Resolution No. 22042600, 2. Signature22042600

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
5/19/2022	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED		
5/12/2022	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed On Next Week's Final Passage Calendar		

Honoring twelve of Philadelphia's emerging Asian American leaders: Lan Dinh, Chi-Ser Tran, Neil Makhija, Dr. Esther Hio-Tong Castillo, Stephanie Sun, Anne Ishii, Jennie Nam, Sreymum Sok, Sinta Storms, Thi Lam, Sheila Maddali, and Maia Weintraub for their deep commitment to empowering their communities, and their work in fighting for food sovereignty, dismantling barriers in social services, expanding economic opportunity and justice, investing in community-based arts, advancing representation in sports, and protecting civil rights on the occasion of Asian American and Pacific Islander History Month.

WHEREAS, Today's generation of Asian American and Pacific Islander leaders have taken the mantle from trailblazing elders and mentors in their communities, and are setting the agenda in the fight for social justice, civil rights, and self-determination here in Philadelphia and across the country; and

WHEREAS, The emerging leaders recognized here are merely a few inspiring examples of the growing ranks of community organizers, educators, artists, attorneys, public servants, and entrepreneurs in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities who are transforming the landscape of the struggle for justice, and developing new ways to empower their communities to fight for themselves; and

WHEREAS, Lan Dinh is one of the co-founders of VietLead, a grassroots social justice organization focused on youth engagement and organizing through a lens of racial justice and anti-violence, health promotion and navigation, civic engagement, and community-building projects. She is currently the Farm and Food Sovereignty Director, and will be stepping into the role of Co-Executive Director later this year. Lan Dinh is the daughter of Vietnamese refugees, and grew up in West Philadelphia and Upper Darby. She draws her motivation for community work from watching how her parents heal and reclaim their dignity through their

love of land and food. In her role at VietLead, Lan Dinh has channeled her passion for popular community-based education by developing the organization's Youth Leadership and Community Farming programs. She is also a member of Soil Generation and Land Based Jawns, and served as a Chronicling Resistance fellow with the Free Library of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Chi-Ser Tran is a Staff Attorney at Community Legal Service (CLS), where she represents low-income individuals with disabilities to defend their right to critical benefits, as well as focusing on language rights advocacy and improving access to legal services for clients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Prior to her role at CLS, Chi-Ser Tran was a Fellow at the Initiative for Public Interest Law at Yale, where she addressed employment barriers faced by low-wage, LEP Asian immigrant workers, and has also worked to advance voting rights and youth leadership. She has received numerous honors for her commitment to public service, and currently serves as president of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania (APABA-PA). Chi-Ser Tran has conducted community education and biweekly clinics in Chinatown and South Philadelphia, provided direct representation, and engaged in policy advocacy, furthering her commitment to making the law accessible and using it to drive needed social change; and

WHEREAS, Neil Makhija is Executive Director of Indian American Impact <http://iaimpact.org/>, the nation's leading South Asian civic organization. As the son of Indian immigrants who made Pennsylvania home, he is passionate about enfranchising underrepresented communities and engaging new citizens in state and local politics. In 2021, Neil Makhija was one of 13 Asian American civil rights leaders <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/08/05/readout-of-the-president-and-vice-presidents-meeting-with-asian-american-native-hawaiian-and-pacific-islander-leaders/> invited to the White House to advise President Biden and Vice President Harris on voting rights and immigration. In his private law practice, he has represented essential workers in fair pay litigation, litigated on behalf of the City of Philadelphia against manufacturers of opioid painkillers, and brought the first class action against e-cigarette manufacturers for unlawful marketing to children. He currently serves as President of the South Asian Bar Association of Philadelphia <https://www.sabaphilly.com/> and is a Lecturer in Law at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Esther Hio-Tong Castillo is the Program Manager for the Chinese Immigrant Family Wellness Initiative at the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC). In her role, she is responsible for PCDC's community-based equity work, including responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting mental health and racial healing, and fighting anti-Asian hate. Dr. Esther Hio-Tong Castillo has two decades of experience in education as a teacher, counselor, community advocate and faculty in various educational settings, and is committed to making education accessible and equitable across underserved and marginalized communities, including immigrant, youth, women, LGBTQIA, Asian, Black, and Latinx communities. She is also the founder of Bridging Worlds, a consulting firm which focuses on helping leaders in the education sector create inclusive learning spaces by developing equity-centered curricula and practices grounded in social justice; and

WHEREAS, Stephanie Sun is the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, and is the first immigrant woman appointed to the role. Prior to joining the Commission, she served as the Associate Director of Partnerships for "Philly Counts," and was responsible for developing successful community engagement strategies in marginalized communities around the U.S. Census, COVID-19 vaccinations and mitigation, and the 2020 election. Stephanie Sun has served as a member of the Board of Directors for numerous non-profit organizations and is also a journalist and the Senior Director of Metro Chinese Weekly, the largest Asian language newspaper in the tri-state area, where she serves as a voice for the immigrant community; and

WHEREAS, Anne Ishii is the Executive Director of Asian Arts Initiative, an organization dedicated to "creat [ing] community through the power of art." She is also a writer and editor with a background in Japanese letters, and is committed to highlighting issues relating to gender and sexuality. Anne Ishii currently hosts the arts and culture documentary series "Movers and Makers," exploring stories about creators in the Philadelphia region. In 2013 she co-founded MASSIVE GOODS, a lifestyle brand and arts agency representing queer and feminist artists from Japan which has produced multiple volumes of graphic novels and a line of clothing and accessories. Anne Ishii has been published in BUST, Nylon, Slate, Publishers Weekly, the Village Voice, the Philadelphia Inquirer and many other publications, and has translated and rewritten over twenty books. Despite the pandemic, she has created critical space for community care and connection; and

WHEREAS, Jennie Nam and Sreymum Sok are the co-founders of the Southeast Asian Vendors' Association of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Park, a market which is renowned as a culinary landmark and which has long reflected the ingenuity and resilience of immigrant and refugee communities. Southeast Asian vendors overcame significant barriers and, under the Association's leadership, the market has grown exponentially in size. As co-founders, Jennie Nam and Sreymum Sok successfully advocated for over $150,000 in both government and philanthropic funding to help formalize the market, as well as expand its economic and cultural impact in Philadelphia. Jennie Nam is the first Cambodian-American Business Manager for the Department of Commerce, and helped advance the national #STOPASIANHATE movement in response to the rising threat of Anti-Asian violence across the country. Sreymum Sok serves as the current president of the Southeast Asian Vendors Association of FDR Park, and was the first Southeast Asian member of the Planning Ambassadors program with the Fairmount Park Conservancy; and

WHEREAS, Sinta Storms is a traditional Indonesian dancer, community leader, and activist who uplifts folk art traditions to support community-building and education about critical issues impacting the Indonesian diaspora in Philadelphia. She has devoted her work to uplifting women of color in the arts, serving as Operations Manager for the Leeway Foundation and formerly at the Philadelphia Folklore Project. In 2011, Sinta Storms founded Modero Dance Company to provide a supportive space for Indonesian community members to freely express themselves through dance while being inclusive of all backgrounds, identities, immigration status, and religious affiliation, and has performed with the Company at numerous prestigious events internationally, and within the United States. Sinta Storms is also one of the co-founders of Gapura Philadelphia, a new community center that aims to serve as a gate to and for the Indonesian community, linking past, present, and future through economic, social, and cultural empowerment; and

WHEREAS, Thi Lam currently serves as Operations Director at SEAMAAC, facilitating the non-profit's work to serve and build power for immigrants and refugees, and other politically, economically, and socially marginalized communities by providing direct services and developing community leadership. Throughout the pandemic, Thi Lam has provided essential leadership for SEAMAAC's innovative hunger relief programs, which have fed many thousands of people and distributed both groceries and culturally responsive meals, while supporting local and immigrant small businesses. He serves on the PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Advisory Committee, and is a passionate advocate for LGBTQIA rights. In his free time, he enjoys painting and runs a floral business that he co-owns in Southwest Philly; and

WHEREAS, Sheila Maddali is the Executive Director and co-founder of the National Legal Advocacy Network (NLAN), a non-profit organization dedicated to using creative legal strategies and movement lawyering as a tool to build power for marginalized workers and create systemic change through deep partnerships with worker centers and other base-building organizations. As the daughter of South Asian immigrants, she began organizing as a teenager when her community was targeted by racial profiling and immigration enforcement in the aftermath of 9/11. Sheila Maddali has been involved in the struggle for racial and economic justice and anti-fascism for nearly two decades, and has organized around ending immigrant detention and prison expansion,

and expanding sex workers' rights. Prior to leading NLAN, Sheila served as the Director of Law & Organizing at the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United; and

WHEREAS, Maia Weintraub is a national fencing champion and Olympian who has been at the forefront of the international fencing circuit for years despite being just 19 years old. A graduate of Friends Select School and currently a freshman at Princeton University, Maia Weintraub is the 2022 NCAA National Women's Fencing champion in foil which she won in March 2022. She was also a member of Team USA at the Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan in 2020, where she was an alternate and a training partner. Maia Weintraub began fencing at age 8 at the Fencing Academy of Philadelphia, and has been nationally ranked for years at the national and international level. She currently has a goal to make the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is a better, healthier and more vibrant city thanks to the presence and accomplishments of these twelve Asian American leaders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby honor Lan Dinh, Chi-Ser Tran, Neil Makhija, Dr. Esther Hio-Tong Castillo, Stephanie Sun, Anne Ishii, Jennie Nam, Sreymum Sok, Sinta Storms, Thi Lam, Sheila Maddali, and Maia Weintraub for their deep commitment to empowering their communities, and their work in fighting for food sovereignty, dismantling barriers in social services, expanding economic opportunity and justice, investing in community-based arts, advancing representation in sports, and protecting civil rights on the occasion of Asian American and Pacific Islander History Month.