

**celebrAsian**  
11TH ANNUAL ASIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL  
BRIDGING GENERATIONS



# TWO DECADES OF CELEBRASIAN



BRINGING  
AWARENESS



PRESERVING  
CULTURE



CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past twenty years, CelebrAsian has been the largest and fastest growing Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) event in the state of Iowa. Organized and executed almost completely by volunteers, CelebrAsian is made possible through the generous support of individuals, businesses, non-profits, and corporations.

CelebrAsian is a remarkable platform for celebrating and connecting with the diverse and vibrant AAPI cultures that enrich the Iowa community. The festival takes you on an authentic journey through 15 distinct Villages, offering an eclectic tapestry of food, entertainment, demonstrations, competitions, and hands-on activities. It is a CelebrAsian that embraces time-honored traditions and contemporary contributions, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and lifestyles of these communities.



"Judging at CelebrAsian was a rich experience, exploring diverse villages and realizing that **CELEBRATING** our **DIFFERENCES** showcases the many ways we express our shared humanity, each uniquely significant."  
- City of WDSM Sponsor

# 2003



## THE INAUGURAL CELEBRASIAN

Featured eleven Asian communities.

The festival welcomed an overwhelming attendance of nearly 10,000 people, exceeding the capacity of Gray's Lake Park!



# 2015

## 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRASIAN

With new leadership at the helm, IAA responded to the growing popularity of the festival by expanding it to a two-day event at Western Gateway Park.

Over 60,000 people and thirteen villages came together to honor the compassionate leadership of former Governor Robert D. Ray and commemorate the 40th anniversary of Southeast Asian refugee resettlement in Iowa.

Outstanding AAPI students were recognized and awarded \$1,000 scholarships for their academic achievements, volunteerism, and cultural pride.



# 2022

## 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRASIAN

After being canceled in 2020 and rescheduled to the fall in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, CelebrAsian made a roaring comeback over Memorial Weekend.

A record-breaking attendance of over 80,000 showed up!

Introduced the first-ever CelebrAsian Drag Show and Car Show.

# 2007

## 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRASIAN

Due to spring rain and flooding, the entire festival had to be relocated from Water Works Park to the Blank Park Zoo just five days before the event.

Approximately 40,000 people joined the festivities, exploring the twelve villages and experiencing "The Growing SensAsian."

# 2012

## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRASIAN

Perfect spring weather drew nearly 60,000 attendees to the East Campus of the Iowa State Capitol grounds, providing an immersive experience of Asia in Iowa.

The event featured 14 villages, commemorating "A Decade of CelebrAsian" while looking towards the future and embracing the past.



EST. 2002

## CELEBRASIAN

## 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRASIAN

The festival celebrated its 15th anniversary by shining a spotlight on all the villages that form the heart of the event.

Created a quilt artwork featuring indigenous fabric from each Village, to treasure and showcase for years to come.

Enhanced village competition with increased monetary awards and accolades.

# 2017



## 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CELEBRASIAN

A record 15 Villages will connect you to an entire continent as they present their communities through crafts, history, art, gifts, and food.

A record number of vendors, businesses, and community organizations for a total of 80+ at CelebrAsian 2023.

# FESTIVAL VILLAGES

Cambodian  
Chinese  
Filipino  
Hmong  
Indian  
Indonesian  
Japanese  
Korean  
Laotian  
Myanmar  
Nepalese  
Pacific Islander  
Tai Dam  
Thai  
Vietnamese



"When I moved to the US, I thought it would be over. But CelebrAsian has given me the stage to continue to dance, to share my heritage and culture. It brings me tremendous joy!"

– Performer.



Each Village showcased indigenous culture, history, foods, art, entertainment, and hands-on activities. Driven by a sense of pride in their culture and heritage, these Villages are the heart and soul of the event. The Iowa Asian Alliance and its sponsors also showcased other aspects of AAPI culture by presenting educational opportunities, music, visual and performing arts for a spectacular family friendly event.

# FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

This year's theme was "Jewels of Asia," which proved to be a perfect choice for our 20th-anniversary celebration. The theme inspired a stunning logo and allowed each Village to proudly showcase what they considered to be the true gems of their community. With unwavering enthusiasm, the Villages wholeheartedly embraced the theme and dedicated themselves to creating an engaging and unforgettable experience for their visitors. The bar was undeniably raised by previous winners, motivating all the Villages to bring their A-game to the table, making it the most fierce competition yet. The judges were moved by the story of the Tai Dam Village resulting in their honor of 1st Place for Best Village. A historic milestone win for them- congratulations on this remarkable achievement!

## Judges' Choice for Best Village

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tai Dam Village
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thai Village
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Village

Placing 1st left us stunned! We were in awe of our neighboring Villages. We believe our unique **INSPIRING STORY** of the Tai Dam people in Iowa was the differentiator. I couldn't be more proud of our team for securing this first time honor and it won't be our last!  
- Tai Dam Village

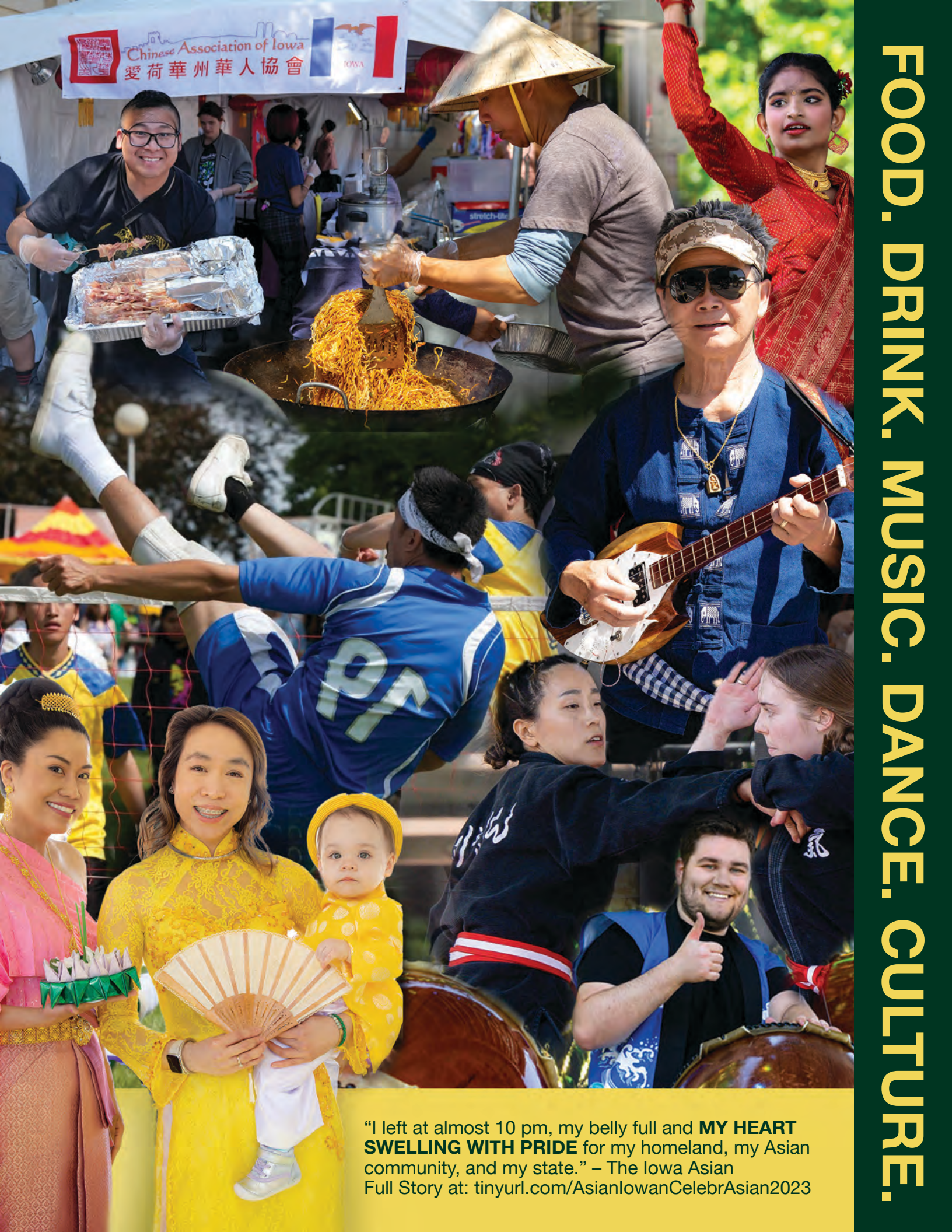
## Judges' Choice Village Awards

- Best Food: Myanmar Village
- Best Cultural Connection: Cambodian Village
- Best Spirit Award: Indonesian Village

## People's Choice for Village Awards

- Best Food: Indian Village
- Best Cultural Connection: Hmong Village
- Best Overall Village: Thai Village



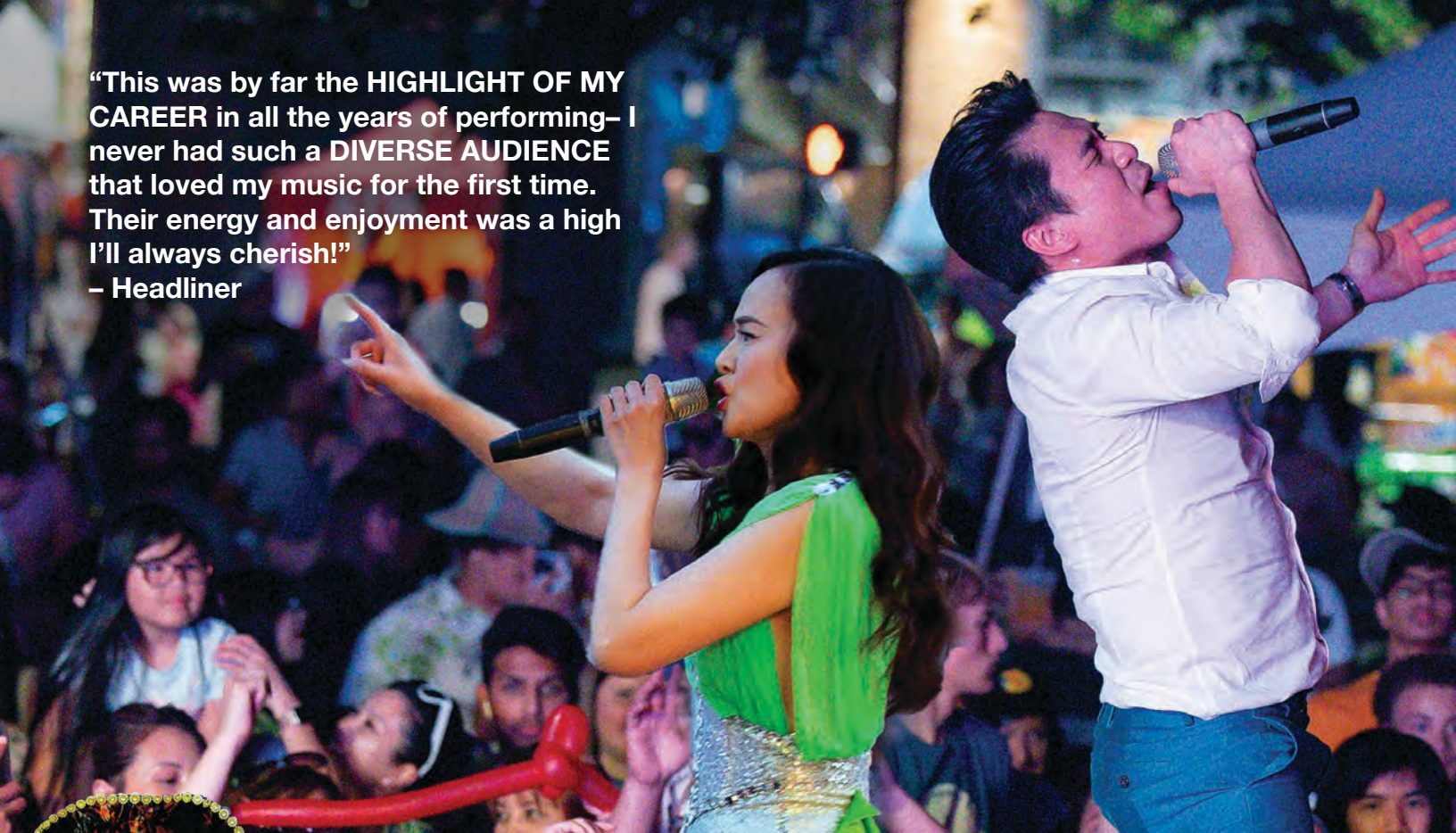


FOOD. DRINK. MUSIC. DANCE. CULTURE.

"I left at almost 10 pm, my belly full and **MY HEART SWELLING WITH PRIDE** for my homeland, my Asian community, and my state." – The Iowa Asian Full Story at: [tinyurl.com/AsianlowanCelebrAsian2023](https://tinyurl.com/AsianlowanCelebrAsian2023)

**"This was by far the HIGHLIGHT OF MY CAREER in all the years of performing– I never had such a DIVERSE AUDIENCE that loved my music for the first time. Their energy and enjoyment was a high I'll always cherish!"**

**– Headliner**



## **HEADLINERS: ANDY & HELENA DRAG SHOW & CAR SHOW**





# CelebrAsian 2023 Scholars



Sponsored By Causey & Ye Law

Iowa Asian Alliance awarded five \$1000 scholarships and four \$500 scholarships to outstanding students based on their academic achievements, community service, leadership, and most importantly how they embraced and showcased their culture and heritage.

## \$1000 Scholarship Winners

- Eshaan Chandani
- Peter Sithonnorath
- Cara Jade Hoang
- Emily Inthalangsy
- Anirudh Soni

## \$500 Scholarship Winners

- Winnie Pham
- Isabella Yang
- Athena Singharaj
- Waverly Zhao

## FTC Robotics

Students had the opportunity to showcase their skills and compete for the best-in-class STEM innovation with their robots at CelebrAsian, sponsored by DMACC.

## Next SensAsian

Talents were showcased, and contestants competed for cash prizes, but most importantly, for bragging rights and pride. They were judged not only on their unique talents but also on their ability to incorporate their culture and heritage into their performances, inspiring a fusion of creativity and tradition.

“She signed up for her love of dance but the prize was such a wonderful surprise! Thank you for recognizing her creativity and hard work!” – Next SensAsian Parent



# 80,000+ ATTENDEES

**PROMOTIONAL  
MATERIALS AND  
APPEARANCES  
INCLUDED:**

Catch Des Moines  
Farmers Market  
Community Events  
Facebook  
YouTube  
Local Businesses  
Schools  
Live TV Interviews  
Radio Broadcasts  
And More!



**188%↑**  
Facebook Reach



**105 K**  
Website Page Views



**30 K**  
Unique Website Visitors



**Global**  
Interaction

# FESTIVAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

And over **400 VOLUNTEERS** to make the festival happen!

## **Festival Chair**

Lisa Thai

## **Festival Vice Chair**

Maulik Shroff

## **Festival Advisors**

Sashank Ganti

Liat Kinard

Prem Chandrasekaran

## **Operations Team**

Andrew Thai, Co-Chair

Abhay Jain, Co-Chair

Dayton Wright, Member

Abhishek Pandey, Advisor

Aradhya Agarwal, Advisor

## **Entertainment Team**

Himanshu Pathak, Chair

Mala Vilayvong, Co-Chair

Laurel Howell, Advisor

## **VIP Director**

San Wong

## **Marketing Team**

Lisa Thai, Chair

Keo Pierron, Creative Designer

Jenny Thai, Creative Designer

## **Village & Vendor Team**

Maulik Shroff, Vendor Director

Jade Cao, Village Director

Khong Lovan, Village Advisor

Joshua Leonard, Member

## **Health & Wellness Team**

Jane Machota, Advisor

Andrew Machota, Member

Kathryn Espe, Wellmark Rep

## **Culinary Team**

Bill Lu, Director

Joe D'Souza, Member

## **Volunteer Team**

Jordan Wright, Director

Yekaterina Taykalo, Member

## **Activities Director**

Smita Volz

## **Website Team**

Jason Calhoon, Director

Thao Pham, Coordinator

## **Table Tennis Director**

Kevin Nability

## **Martial Arts Director**

Himanshu Pathak

## **Beverage Director**

Liat Kinard

## **Car Show Director**

Chris Lo

## **Takraw Director**

Nou Cam

## **Photographers**

## **& Videographers**

Debbie Burk-Flores

Kelly Chamberlain

Photos by Trang

Rocco

Tina Intarapanont

"Over half a decade ago, I embarked on a volunteer journey with CelebrAsian, driven by a desire to build meaningful connections with the Des Moines' Asian community. Through active engagement, I've honed leadership skills, refined communication abilities, and mastered intricate problem-solving." – Festival Chair



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

## PRESENTING



GREATER DES MOINES



## CHAMPION



## LEADER

Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath

Bankers Trust

Broadlawns

Hy-Vee

Bridgestone Firestone

Causey & Ye Law

APIA Vote

EMC

## AMBASSADOR

DMACC Heineken F&G Annuities & Life Corteva Agriscience WDSM Human Rights Commission

NCMIC IMT Insurance Federal Home Loan Bank Aetna / UNG Financial Services / United Healthcare

## FRIEND

Des Moines University

Ingersoll Wine & Spirits

ATM In Motion

## SUPPORTER

Edward Jones

Gallagher



# SUPPORTERS & COLLABORATORS

CelebrAsian is an exceptional opportunity for government, corporate, and nonprofit organizations to come together as sponsors and vendors, aligning with Iowa's largest Asian American Pacific Islander event. Alongside dedicated volunteers and talented performers, our collective passion is to promote understanding and appreciation for the invaluable contributions of AAPI communities to Iowa's economic, social, and cultural vibrancy.

The Iowa Asian Alliance Board of Directors and the CelebrAsian leadership team are firmly committed to upholding the event's distinguished traits of unity, prosperity, and uncompromising quality. We recognize that the unwavering support and collaboration of sponsors, vendors, and performers, along with the invaluable dedication of time and talent from loyal volunteers, play a crucial role in fulfilling this commitment. We express heartfelt gratitude to the donors and volunteers who embody passion, generosity, and steadfast commitment to the success and impact of CelebrAsian, pushing it to greater heights each year.

## NU HUYNH

Executive Director, Iowa Asian Alliance

## IAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Directors

Chen Huang

Rod Suhr

Daniel Herting

### Secretary

Emily Feldmann

### Governance

David Yoshimura

### Treasurer

Mindy CaVan

### Recognition

Liat Kinard

### Chair

Mark Theis

**SAVE THE DATE FOR  
CELEBRASIAN 2024,  
ON MAY 24 & 25!**



## IOWA ASIAN ALLIANCE

Des Moines, Iowa

[www.iowaasianalliance.com](http://www.iowaasianalliance.com)

[IAAadmin@iowaasianalliance.com](mailto:IAAadmin@iowaasianalliance.com)

