

# REPORT

2008

**The Iowa Asian Alliance (IAA) presented celebrAsian 2008:** The 6th Annual Asian Heritage Festival at the East Campus of the Iowa State Capitol Complex on Saturday, May 17th, 2008. This year's celebrAsian was co-hosted by the Polk County Board of Supervisors and Harrah's & Horseshoe Council Bluffs. The majestic capitol dome provided an exquisite back drop for the food, entertainment, activities, and displays that thrilled the five senses of all who poured onto the capitol grounds to experience Asia in Iowa. The picture-perfect setting and ideal weather brought a record crowd of over 40,000, to make this the largest Asian-American celebration of its kind in the region.

**"As a first time attendee, I have to admit it was larger then I had imagined. I did not expect to see such a large and diverse cross-section of the Asian community... I had a great time participating in the event."**

**Penn Hongthong, Professional Chef**

**"Congratulations on a very successful festival... so much to see and so much to eat."**

**Jon Cuyson, Artist-in-Residence, celebrAsian 2008: IAsian Fine Art Pavilion.**





**“I believe events like the Asian Heritage Festival  
are critical to the success of this city.  
It is the reason I choose to live in Des Moines.”**

*Rick Kephart, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to a fun, informative, entertaining, and interactive celebration of cultural diversity, celebrAsian also contributes significantly to the quality of life in Central Iowa. It has become a premier cultural destination that draws visitors from across the Midwest and beyond. This year’s theme — **“Rooted in the East, blooming in the West”** — reflects both pride in our cultural heritage and the optimistic pursuit of our vision of an Iowa where Asian-Americans are an integral part of a vibrant and prosperous community of diverse people. The theme provided the inspiration for the largest and most diverse array of offerings in the six year history of this event:

- From the Goddess in the Nepalese village to the interactive displays in the Cambodian Village featuring children in that community, twelve Asian villages presented their communities through crafts, history, art, gifts, and food. Villages include: *Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Laos, Nepalese, Taidam, Vietnamese, and Thai.*
- The Diplomacy Village featured government and non-profit organizations dedicated to connecting Iowa to the world and promoting international relations with Asia.
- Sports enthusiasts participated in volleyball and sipa competitions while friends and family cheered them on. Warrior spirit was unleashed at the Iowa Marital Arts demonstrations and competition.
- Energetic young men from the Indian community stole the show to become the “*Next SensAsian,*” demonstrating that traditional cultural performances can be sensational and engaging.
- The annual fashion show highlighted traditional clothing alongside current trends.
- Festival-goers were enticed by the many flavors of Pan-Asian cuisine as they savored both traditional dishes and contemporary fusion fare.
- Young festival goers enjoyed celebrating the Year of the Rat at the Children’s Activities Village where children of all ages engaged in interactive activities and crafts.
- With an emphasis on healthy eating, the Health and Wellness Village provided full health screenings and information as well as demonstrations on the health benefits of pet therapy and acupuncture.



**“IASian was designed to help Iowa Asian Artists to explore their triumphs and challenges in their Asian identity through their craft.”**

**Kemlyn Tan Bappe,**  
*Artist and Artistic Director,*  
*Galleria Imago Dei*

## NEW IN 2008

- In an exploration of identity, place, and culture, nine Iowa artists debuted original works of art at the IASian Fine Arts Pavilion. The artists were mentored by internationally renowned Filipino artist, Jon Cuyson.
- Contemporary live music and traditional cultural performances entertained festival-goers all day. National headliners Tatum Jones and Magnetic North shared the stage with local talent Gimmik, Jade Lea, and Larry Berenguel, while our Asian communities showcased traditional and cultural performances.
- “*Next InspirAsian*” featured the original designs of creative Asian fashion designers.
- Professional chef, Penn Hongthong, demonstrated the art of Lao cooking while others put their culinary skills to the test in the Cravin’ Asian cooking competition.
- Over eighty individuals became part of the festivities by competing in the inaugural Martial arts tournament.

**“The martial arts tournament presented an opportunity for young and old alike... Truly an opportunity for a multicultural exposure... creating mutual respect, acceptance, and appreciation for individual skills, effort, and performance.”**

**Sifu Jose Mendosa,** *Chinese Martial Arts Academy*



## FESTIVAL SHOWCASE COMMUNITIES

**“I was blown away by how many people attended and how many non Asians participated in the event. . . There is a strong sense of community and interest in the APA community in Des Moines.”**

**Derek Kan, Magnetic North**

Congratulations to the following winners of the village contest:

- 1st: Nepales**
- 2nd: Indian**
- 3rd: Cambodian**

- Angkor Wat Friendship Association
- Chinese Association of Iowa
- Filipino-American Association of Iowa
- Indo-American Association of Iowa
- Japan America Society of Iowa
- Korean American Society of Iowa
- Lao-American Association of Iowa
- Nepalese Community of Iowa
- Society of Burma
- Tai United Foundation
- Thai Association of Iowa
- Vietnamese-American Community in Iowa



**“Fostering an inclusive community for our employees and customers to live and work in is an important element in achieving our overall diversity objectives... Pioneer also hoped to increase brand awareness/recognition through this sponsorship as well as establish connections with dignitaries and VIP guests at the reception... we met all of these objectives/goals with this year’s sponsorship.”**

**Jennifer Gribble,**  
*Pioneer, A DuPont Company*

## SPONSORS

Once again, generous support from our sponsors has allowed us to continue to offer free admission to the festival while ensuring the quality and innovation that all have come to expect from celebrAsian and the Iowa Asian Alliance.

### CO-HOSTS



### TITLE SPONSORS



### CHAMPIONS



### LEADERS

**Arthur Neis**



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