

9th Annual Asian American Family Institute Day



DCFS Director Marc D. Smith



Asian American Advisory Council members with Director Smith and Chief of Staff Jassen Strokosch



Keynote speaker
Dr. Yoonsun Choi

The Illinois DCFS Asian American Advisory Council held its 9th Annual Asian American Family Institute Day on June 2 at the beautiful, magnificent mile site of Loyola University – Water Tower. The theme was *Stronger Together: Uniting to Advance Innovative Change*. DCFS Director Marc D. Smith joined us and offered insights into the progress DCFS has made under his leadership. Dr. James Marley, interim dean and associate professor at the Loyola University School of Social Work provided opening remarks. The keynote speaker was Dr. Yoonsun Choi, professor and director of the doctoral program at the University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy and Practice. Dr. Choi shared information about her research on family styles of parenting in Korean American families and Filipino American families. Some highlights included statistics showing that the Asian population surpassed Hispanic population as the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the US over the last three years, and how the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, culture and immigration have contributed to the paradox of Asian youth having good external outcomes

but poor mental health. As this is an ongoing study, initial results reveal that positive parent-child bonding and explicit affection may be more helpful for mental health and family-oriented activities predicted less anti-social and depressive symptoms in Asian youth.

Multiple Asian American community agencies provided exhibits to inform participants about services they offered, including mental health counseling, domestic violence prevention, hate crime reporting tools and more. The eight workshops provided child welfare staff with enhanced knowledge about domestic violence, parenting in South Asian culture, small business opportunities and overcoming barriers, LGBTQ+ intersecting identities, trauma informed parent-child engagement, mental health and self-care, reversing homelessness and the opioid crisis in Illinois. During lunch, the Meher Dance Company performed delightful Bollywood dances. The dance instructor ended the performance by engaging attendees in Bollywood dancing. The Illinois DCFS Asian American Advisory Council thanks our partners and participants for making the institute a wonderful success.

Congratulations to the 9th Annual Asian American Advisory Council Family Institute Day Awardees

- Special Recognition Awardees:
Feisal Khan, Administrative Law Judge Technical Advisor III, Office of the Chief of Staff and
Stany D'Souza, Associate Regional Administrator, Division of Child Protection – Cook North
- Special Community-Based Partner Employee Recognition:
Suk M. Wong, Foster Care Supervisor, National Youth Advocate Program
- Special Former Vice Chairperson Recognition:
Nisha Patel, Statewide Administrator, Domestic Violence Intervention Program, Division of Clinical Practice and Professional Development
- Employee of the Year:
Silvi M. Philip, Office Coordinator, Division of Child Protection – Cook North

Someone you should know: Stany Gerald D'Souza



Stany Gerald D'Souza was born and raised in Mangalore, a port city in the southwest part of India popularly known as “Rome of the East” and immigrated to the United States to fulfill his American dream in 1987. He has been employed with Illinois DCFS for over 33 years. During his tenure, he worked in the Division of Child Protection for over 13 years, beginning as an investigator and later promoting to supervisor, manager, associate regional administrator and regional administrator. He also served in the Division of Operations for eight years as a child welfare specialist, supervisor and manager; and as a supervisor in Day Care Licensing and in Residential Monitoring.

Stany has made significant contributions to the improvement of child welfare services to Asian American families and children and in the Asian American community. His strong, effective and collaborative leadership has been instrumental in planning the DCFS Asian American Family Institute and in his role of founding member, past chairperson and current member of the DCFS Asian American Advisory Council.

Get involved!

Attend an Asian American Advisory Council Meeting

The Asian American Advisory Council meets the fourth Wednesday of the month from 2-3:30 p.m. Meetings are held at 1911 S. Indiana Ave. in Chicago and 1755 Lake Cook Rd. in Deerfield. Individuals may also attend via Microsoft Teams. For more information about the council and upcoming meetings, visit the [Asian American Advisory Council page on the DCFS website](#).

Asian American Advisory Council Upcoming Meeting Dates

January 24, 2024 at 2 pm

February 28, 2024 at 2 pm

March 27, 2024 at 2 pm

April 24, 2024 at 2 pm

May 22, 2024 at 2 pm

June 26, 2024 at 2 pm



Thank you to everyone who participated in the 9th Annual Asian American Family Institute Day on June 2 and for your interest in our Asian American Star newsletter. The Advisory Council will continue to keep you informed of upcoming Asian American events across the state and services available to the Asian American community.

The Asian American Advisory Council continues to encourage the use of data disaggregation for greater precision in assuring equity and improving the quality of services for the families and children we serve. Data disaggregation is the separation of compiled information into smaller units to reveal underlying trends and patterns. When data is collected in general categories, specific communities become invisible and subgroup disparities can be hidden. When we work together to capture and analyze subpopulation data, it will help us identify and eliminate the gaps in service to our families and children. We also aim to promote employment recruitment and a hiring practice that ensures equity and make a positive change for everyone.

Best Regards,

Nancy Rodriguez

Asian American Star Newsletter Committee Chairperson

2024 Upcoming Asian American Events

Feb. 10 5 p.m.	Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Celebration	100 Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
Feb. 17 12-4 p.m.	2024 Argyle Lunar New Year Celebration	West Argyle St. & North Winthrop Ave. Chicago, IL
Feb. 18 1-3 p.m.	Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade	2301 S. Wentworth Ave. Chicago, IL 60616

If you have an event you would like to add to the event calendar, please email Ada Tong, Chief of Asian American Services at ada.tong@illinois.gov.

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新年快乐

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DCFS CELEBRATES THE LUNAR NEW YEAR 2024
THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON • FEB 10

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