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ASIAN WOMEN DONORS GRANT \$70,000 TO NEW YORK CITY NON-PROFITS

New York City, NY, May 14, 2009 – Now completing its fourth year of grant making, the Asian Women Giving Circle (AWGC) will distribute \$70,000 in funding to ten local non-profit Asian American women-led projects in New York City. These outstanding organizations and projects were chosen for their excellence in using the tools of culture, the arts and education to raise awareness and catalyze action around critical issues that impact Asian American communities. Grant checks will be distributed at a garden party at the Mertz Gilmore Foundation, where the Giving Circle has an office, during the evening of June 17th.

In its four years of raising resources and philanthropists, the Asian Women Giving Circle has raised and distributed \$270,000 in New York City to thirty individual artists and community based organizations.

“Asian Americans are under-represented as grant recipients and as funders. The Asian Women Giving Circle is so proud of this docket and we are doing our best to raise the visibility of Asian American women involved in philanthropy. Given the extraordinary economic circumstances of this year, we tried really hard to raise money in order to make grants at the same level as last year. And we did it! We decided to make more grants, for slightly smaller amounts, because so many of our grantees are experiencing intense difficulty with fundraising.” (Hali Lee, Founder of the Asian Women Giving Circle)

Year 2009 Grant recipients are individual artists (with fiscal sponsorship) as well as community based organizations: Adhikaar, the Asian American Writers’ Workshop, the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, Chang-Jin Lee, Esther Chae, New York Asian Women’s Center, Q-Wave, Rising Circle Theater Collective, Third World Newsreel and Yunah Hong.

More information about each project follows:

Adhikaar - *Hamro Katha, Hamrai Aawaz* “Our Stories, Our Own Voices”

Founded by four women in 2005, Adhikaar, which means *rights* in Nepali, is a New York-based women-led organization working with the Nepali speaking community to promote human rights and social justice. This project is a multi-media storytelling project for young women (ages 16-25) of Nepali descent. They will be mentored by two South Asian artist activists who will lead workshops in a variety of media to explore youth relevant themes, such as migration, home, gender, sexuality, race, love, family. For more information, please visit www.adhikaar.org.

Asian American Writers' Workshop - *Talk Story: Sharing Stories Across Generations*

Founded in 1991, the Asian American Writers' Workshop is the largest non-profit devoted to creating, publishing, developing and disseminating creative writing by Asian Americans. *Talk Story: Sharing Stories Across Generations* is an oral history project pairing elderly and young Asian American women to share the stories of their lives. It aims to bridge inter-generational gaps as well as create a historical archive of personal narrative by Asian American women. The project will take place in Flushing, Queens and in Brooklyn's Chinatown, and it will be led by women writers who reside in those neighborhoods. Stories will be recorded in bilingual self-made chapbooks, on the Workshop's website and podcasting – for which the Workshop has approached Story Corps. For more information, please visit www.aaww.org

The Center for Traditional Music & Dance - *Chinese Women's Music Initiative*

The Center for Traditional Music & Dance is one of the nation's pioneering music arts organizations, dedicated to preserving and presenting the performing arts traditions of New York's immigrant and ethnic communities since 1968. This Initiative will provide a forum for young women (ages 12-18) in New York's Chinatown to meet and study with established female master musicians on selected Chinese instruments that are prestigious yet have not been traditionally accessible to women and girls. Weekly classes will culminate in a public performance of Chinese opera scenes, with all roles and instruments played by girls. For more information, please visit www.ctmd.org

Chang-Jin Lee - *Comfort Women Wanted*

Chang-Jin Lee is a Korean-born visual artist who lives in NYC. Her large-scale public art project, “Homeland Security Garden” at the World Financial Center Winter Garden explored our political and psychological insecurity in the post 9-11 world. Chang-Jin seeks funding to continue

researching “Comfort Women Wanted,” a large-scale public artwork to be placed in a major transportation hub (like Grand Central Station). She will incorporate the tools of advertising, such as putting posters on bus shelters, phone booths and an information desk. Visitors will be invited to interact with the exhibit. The project hopes to increase awareness of the 200,000 women who were sexually enslaved in Asia during World War II, connecting this historical atrocity to the continuing sexual exploitation and trafficking of Asian women today. For more information, please visit www.changjinlee.net

Esther Chae - *So the Arrow Flies*

With only a turn of the chair, Esther Chae portrays four strong women of Korean descent. This theatrical, one-woman show explores the ramifications of the War on Terror, identity, national pride and allegiance, through the lens of Asian women characters’ and their love for one another. Esther was selected as a TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design Conference) Fellow this year for this play. Anna Deavere Smith was a mentor at NYU. Esther requests funds to premiere her play in NYC. For more information, please visit www.estherchae.com or www.myspace.com/sothearrowflies

New York Asian Women’s Center – *Workplace*

Founded in 1982, the New York Asian Women’s Center helps battered Asian women to overcome violence and govern their own lives, free of abuse. *Workplace* is an interactive multimedia installation based on the stories of Asian American women survivors of domestic violence – exploring how domestic violence affects women in the workplace. Collaborators include musicians and artists Woody Pak, Heather Greer and Liubo Borissov. The installation will simulate a workplace environment, including a telephone where visitors may leave their own stories or comments. For more information, please visit www.nyawc.org

Q-Wave - *Lunar New Year for All*

Q-Wave, founded in 2004, is dedicated to strengthening the voices of lesbian/ bisexual/ queer women and transgender/ gender variant people of Asian descent. This is a collaborative community art project championing LGBT equality at the 2010 Lunar New Year Parade in Manhattan’s Chinatown. The spectacle may incorporate a float, giant puppets, mobile murals, stilt-walkers, dancers and musicians. It will be designed in collaboration with local community organizations. Q-Wave will also host art and education workshops, hold a press conference and

sponsor a Lunar New Year for All poster contest. For more information please visit www.q-wave.org

Rising Circle Theater Collective - Q-up

Rising Circle Theater Collective, founded in 2000, is led by theater artists of color committed to producing work that reflects the diversity of the world in which we live. Q Up is a pilot program aimed at Asian American high school girls in Queens. It is a four-day workshop with professional Asian American women artists in which the girls will build skills and produce their own work. The workshops will take place in the Queens Theatre in Flushing Meadow Park. For more information, please visit www.risingcircle.org

Third World Newsreel - *Asian Girls Empowerment Through Media*

Third World Newsreel, founded in 1967, fosters alternative social, cultural and artistic visions in media, particularly visions by and about communities of color, marginalized communities and that address social justice issues. This project is a summer-fall workshop series for young Asian women (age 14-21) who will be trained in multimedia production while exploring media literacy and activism in the context of race, class and gender. The goal is to equip young Asian women with the ability to deconstruct the layers of mainstream media messages with which they are bombarded, while empowering them to create their own. The series will culminate in a public screening at Anthology Film Archives and at the Newsreel's 40th anniversary conference at Hunter. It will be included in the educational distribution that the Newsreel provides to thousands of schools and colleges nationwide. For more information, please visit www.twn.org

Yunah Hong - *"Anna May Wong: In Her Own Words," a documentary film.* Yunah Hong is a Korean American documentary filmmaker. Her film's subject is Anna May Wong (1905-1961), a laundryman's daughter who became an international movie star, an activist and artist despite the limitations of the day. She achieved worldwide popularity in the 1920s and 30s. Yunah seeks funding to distribute her film, launch a website, and implement an outreach program to schools and community groups. The Center for Asian American Media is helping Yunah prepare her film for a possible PBS broadcast, and will broadcast it via its own satellites to local stations. For more information, please contact yunah@earthlink.net.

About the Asian Women Giving Circle

The Asian Women Giving Circle is a group of Asian American women pooling their money to fund other Asian women in NYC who use the tools of art to further a social equity goal. We work together to raise resources to support Asian American serving, Asian American women-led social change organizations in New York City's under-served communities. We raise resources and philanthropists. The Asian Women Giving Circle has a fiscal sponsor, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) (www.aapip.org).

For more information, please visit www.asianwomengivingcircle.org

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