



Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (PACCA)

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026 EDITION

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

BUSINESS NEWS & INSIGHTS

Rivian's Move to Scottsdale:
A Signal for Opportunity in
Our Community

BUSINESS RESOURCE TOOLBOX

How to Access Business
Grants

COMMUNITY EVENT SPOTLIGHT

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH
STORYTELLING:
WHY SUPPORTING OTHER
COMMUNITIES MATTER

COMMUNITY & CULTURE
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE
DAY AND THE SPIRIT THAT
BINDS US

PACCA BUSINESS INITIATIVES #BIZCONNECT WITH PACCA

COMMUNITY EVENT SPOTLIGHT
BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH
STORYTELLING:
WHY SUPPORTING OTHER
COMMUNITIES MATTERS

COMMUNITY IMPACT
ALPHA PHI OMEGA ACNA &
OUR COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

BUSINESS NEWS & INSIGHTS
What Every Immigrant
Needs to Know Before
Starting a Business in the
United States

BUSINESS NEWS & LEADERSHIP
PACCA Membership
Ambassadors Team Update

COMMUNITY VOICES
WHAT PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE
DAY MEANS TO ME AS A
VIETNAMESE MOM

PACCA EVENT SPOTLIGHT
WOMEN WHO RISE: Real
Stories of Resilience,
Leadership & Empowerment

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY.
RISING TOGETHER.

PACCA's strength comes from deep community roots: culture, service, and shared history.
While our collective vision lifts businesses, leaders, and future generations forward.

In 2026, we honor where we come from as we grow together into what's next.

MISSION

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ASSISTING FILIPINO-AMERICAN
ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS BY PROVIDING
TIMELY AND INFORMATIVE RESOURCES, PROMOTING
AND FOSTERING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS, AND
MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT AMONG OUR MEMBERS
AND THE BROADER BUSINESS COMMUNITY, BOTH
LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

VISION

TO BE THE PREMIER RESOURCE FOR FILIPINO-
AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURS, CREATING A THRIVING
COMMUNITY THAT DRIVES INNOVATION, GROWTH,
AND IMPACT IN THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL BUSINESS
LANDSCAPE.

Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (PACCA)

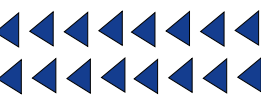


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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT EMERITUS & STATE PRESIDENT



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT EMERITUS

As I look back on recent PACCA moments, I am reminded that our strength continues to come from our people and our shared commitment to community, culture, and service.

In times of change and growth, we are called to stay attentive, engaged, and grounded in purpose. What we build together is shaped not only by opportunity, but by how we show up for one another.

These shared experiences continue to affirm that PACCA's impact is not defined by individual events, but by the steady cultivation of relationships, trust, and collective progress over time.

My sincere appreciation goes to all members, partners, and volunteers whose continued commitment sustains this work. Our journey remains one of continuity the consistent choice to engage, serve, and build together.



With appreciation,
Edward Lago

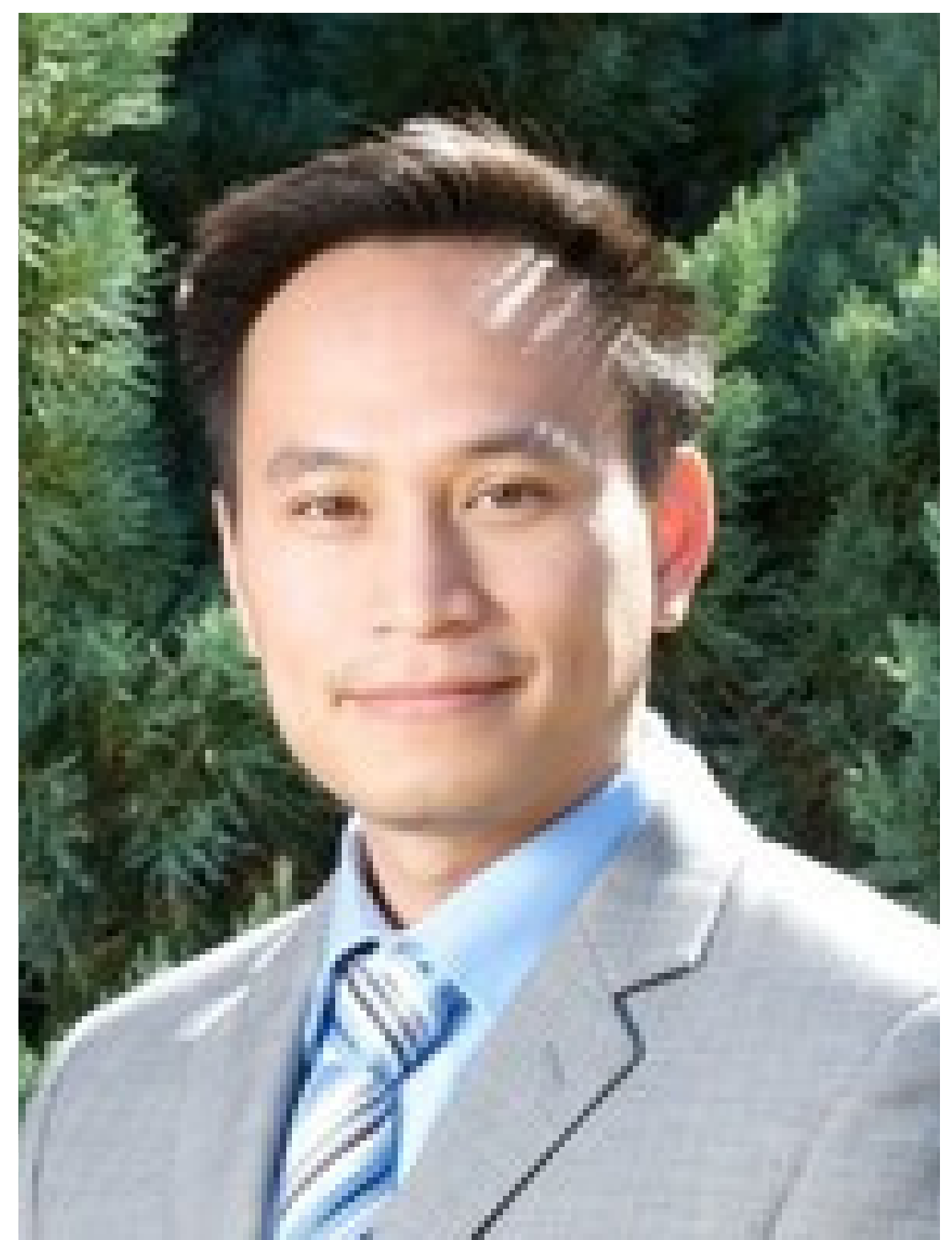
MESSAGE FROM THE 2026 PACCA STATE PRESIDENT

PACCA continues to be shaped by the energy, dedication, and collaboration of its members. In every gathering and interaction, I am reminded that our organization thrives when we actively participate, share ideas, and support one another's efforts.

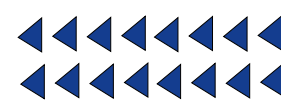
As we navigate a dynamic and evolving environment, there is value in staying proactive, building connections, strengthening partnerships, and creating opportunities that uplift both our members and the broader community we serve.

Our progress is not accidental; it is the result of consistent engagement and the willingness of many to contribute in meaningful ways. Each effort, whether large or small, adds to the momentum we are building together.

I am grateful to all who continue to invest their time, talent, and trust in PACCA's mission. Your involvement ensures that we remain a strong, relevant, and forward-moving organization.



With gratitude ,
Atty. Luan Mai



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As I reflect on recent PACCA moments, I am reminded of how deeply connected our work, culture, and community truly are.

From Rivian’s expansion into Scottsdale, we see Arizona’s continued evolution as a hub for innovation and opportunity encouraging us to stay informed, aware, and engaged in a rapidly shifting business landscape.

Through the humanitarian mission led by Alpha Phi Omega ACNA and Our Community Foundation, we are reminded that service remains at the heart of true leadership. Their work reflects what it means to lead with purpose, showing up for communities in need and turning compassion into meaningful impact.

The Las Damas de Rizal Inauguration and our celebration of Philippine Independence Day honored heritage, leadership, and the enduring strength of identity that continues to unite us across generations.

And at our Women Who Rise PACCA event, we witnessed the power of voice, leadership, and shared stories that continue to inspire confidence, courage, and action within our community.

Together, these moments reflect a simple but powerful truth: PACCA is not defined by any single event, but by a community that grows through connection, purpose, and shared impact.

As we continue moving forward, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to every member, partner, and volunteer who continues to show up for PACCA in meaningful ways. Each contribution, whether visible or behind the scenes, strengthens the foundation of what we are building together.

PACCA’s growth has never been about one moment or one milestone, but about a consistent commitment to connection, service, and shared purpose. Thank you for being part of a community that continues to believe in this vision and bring it to life.

With gratitude for this community,
Kristine Bartolome



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

June is here! And honestly, it might just be my favorite month of the year. For me personally, June carries a weight that is both joyful and profound. It is the month we Filipino-Americans pause to celebrate Philippine Independence Day, and every year, without fail, it fills me with a pride that is hard to put into words but impossible to ignore.

There is something deeply moving about belonging to a culture with a story like ours... A story of perseverance, of fighting for freedom, of a people who refused to be defined by their circumstances. That pride does not dim with distance or time. If anything, living as a Filipino-American makes it burn a little brighter, because every day I get to carry that heritage into everything I do, including this newsletter.

This month's feature article is my love letter to that feeling. And while it is rooted in the Filipino experience, I believe its heart speaks to everyone because the longing to honor where you come from, to keep your roots alive while building something new, is a deeply human experience. Whatever your background, I hope something in these pages moves you.

June is also a beautiful reminder of why community matters so much. Our Women Who Rise event is a perfect example. It is an inspiring gathering of stories about resilience, leadership, and empowerment that belongs to all of us, regardless of where we were born.

To our Filipino-American members: this month is ours to celebrate with full hearts. And to every reader joining us from a different background: Welcome! We are so glad you are here.

With pride, warmth & so much excitement,
Richelle Caubang





Rivian's Move to Scottsdale: A Signal for Opportunity in Our Community

Big moves in Arizona's business landscape often create ripple effects and Rivian's newest expansion into Scottsdale is one our community should be paying close attention to.

The electric vehicle (EV) company has received approval to open a new service facility in Scottsdale's Mack Innovation Park. While this may sound like just another corporate expansion, it represents something much bigger: a shift in where the future is being built and who has the opportunity to be part of it.



Why This Matters to Us

At PACCA, we believe in Connect | Engage | Thrive, and moments like this are where all three come to life.

Rivian's presence signals growth in industries that are shaping the future: clean energy, advanced technology, and sustainable transportation. But more importantly, it opens doors for local entrepreneurs, professionals, and small business owners, including many within our Filipino-American community.

The Real Opportunity Behind the Headlines

This isn't just about electric vehicles. It's about access.

• For Entrepreneurs

As large companies expand, they rely on networks of vendors, service providers, and partners. From logistics to marketing, maintenance to consulting, there are opportunities to plug into a growing ecosystem.

• For Professionals & Job Seekers

Facilities like this create demand for skilled workers across various roles. Whether in tech, operations, administration, or customer experience, this is a chance to step into future-focused industries.

• For Small Business Owners

More foot traffic and economic activity in areas like Scottsdale mean increased visibility and potential customers. Growth at the top often fuels growth at the local level.



A Call to Be Intentional

Our community is known for resilience, adaptability, and a strong work ethic. But in today's fast-evolving economy, success also requires intentional action.

We must ask ourselves:

- Are we building relationships within emerging industries?
- Are we preparing our businesses to serve larger ecosystems?
- Are we equipping ourselves and the next generation with future-ready skills?

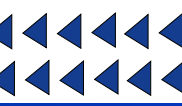
**Opportunities like this don't always come with clear invitations.
They come to those who are aware, prepared, and ready to act.**

Moving Forward Together

Rivian's expansion reminds us that Arizona is not just growing, it is evolving. And as it evolves, so must we.

At PACCA, our role is to ensure that our members are not just observers of change, but active participants in it. By staying connected, engaged, and forward-thinking, we position ourselves and our community to thrive in the opportunities ahead.

Because when growth happens around us, its true impact is realized when we grow with it.



BIZCONNECT WITH PACCA: CONNECTING BUSINESSES, BUILDING COMMUNITY

The Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (PACCA) continues to create meaningful opportunities for connection, collaboration, and growth through its ongoing BizConnect series, a platform dedicated to highlighting inspiring entrepreneurs, professionals, and community leaders across Arizona.

BizConnect serves as more than just a business feature program. It is a space where stories are shared, experiences are celebrated, and relationships within the Filipino-American and multicultural business community are strengthened. Through engaging interviews and conversations, viewers gain insight into the journeys, challenges, and successes of various business owners and leaders making a difference in our community.

To date, **BizConnect** has proudly featured **14 episodes** showcasing remarkable individuals, businesses, organizations, and special PACCA events that continue to inspire and unite the community. Each feature highlights the passion, leadership, culture, and community spirit that make PACCA and its members truly exceptional.

The program reflects PACCA's mission of promoting unity, empowerment, and economic growth by giving members and partners a platform to share their stories, advocacies, and professional expertise. From entrepreneurs and professionals to community events and celebrations, BizConnect continues to shine a spotlight on the people behind the success and impact within our community.



As **PACCA** continues to grow, we look forward to featuring even more inspiring stories, meaningful events, and outstanding individuals through future BizConnect episodes.

To schedule an interview with our BizConnect team, please fill out the Interview Form at <https://paccaz.org/join-bizconnect/>

We look forward to continuing this momentum in the months ahead.



BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH STORYTELLING: WHY SUPPORTING OTHER COMMUNITIES MATTER

One of the greatest strengths of Arizona's diverse communities is our ability to learn from one another, celebrate one another, and grow stronger together. Recently, I had the privilege of attending the OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates Greater Phoenix Chapter AANHPI Film Festival, an inspiring event that showcased the power of storytelling, culture, and community through film.

The festival brought together talented filmmakers, artists, photographers, and storytellers whose work preserves history, honors cultural heritage, and creates meaningful conversations across generations. Events like these remind us that storytelling is much more than entertainment—it is a bridge that connects people, promotes understanding, and strengthens communities.

A special highlight of the event was meeting Willie Ito, the legendary American animator whose remarkable career includes contributions to beloved classics such as **Lady and the Tramp**, **What's Opera, Doc?**, and **One Froggy Evening**. Hearing his journey and learning about Hello Maggie!, based on the true story written by Shigeru Yabu and illustrated by Willie Ito, was both inspiring and educational. His work demonstrates how storytelling can preserve history while inspiring future generations.



As members of PACCA, there is an important lesson we can take from events like this. While we proudly celebrate Filipino culture and achievements, we also have opportunities to support and participate in the cultural events of other communities. When we show up for one another, we build relationships, create partnerships, and strengthen the collective voice of diverse communities throughout Arizona.

The Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community is rich with stories from many cultures, including Filipino voices. Film festivals such as this one provide a platform where Filipino filmmakers, actors, producers, and storytellers can share their work alongside other Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Imagine the impact of seeing more Filipino stories represented on these screens and engaging in conversations that reach audiences beyond our own community.

I encourage PACCA members, artists, filmmakers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders to explore opportunities to participate in future multicultural events and film festivals throughout Arizona. Whether by attending, supporting, or submitting creative work, each of us has the ability to contribute to a larger movement that celebrates diversity, creativity, and inclusion.

The OCA Greater Phoenix AANHPI Film Festival was a beautiful reminder that stories have the power to connect generations, preserve heritage, and unite communities. By supporting one another's events and initiatives, we continue building bridges that benefit all of us.

Together, we can create a future where every culture is celebrated, every voice is valued, and every story has the opportunity to be heard.



A quiet movement rises: Our Community Foundation marks two years of Filipino American pride and service

Our Community Foundation organizers and volunteers were joined by the Office of the Philippine Consul General of Los Angeles (L-R: Trent Brow, Aice Giddings, Ellen Swing, Catherine Cruz, Consul General Adelio Angelito Cruz, Our Community Foundation founder Edward Lago, Tiffany Nguyen, Kristine Bartolome)

MESA, ARIZONA — What began as a quiet vision to serve and uplift has grown into a meaningful movement of Filipino American pride, wellness, education, and community building.

Our Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Arizona, celebrated its second anniversary on June 20, 2026, through its signature outreach event, Our Community Rising 2026: Training, Resources & Opportunity for All, held in partnership with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 1050 S. Hobson in Mesa, Arizona.

At the heart of the foundation's growth is Edward Lago, founder and visionary of Our Community Foundation. A respected Filipino American community leader in Arizona, Lago saw the need for a space where families, youth, professionals, and community members could come together not only to receive support, but to learn, grow, stay healthy, and build a stronger future together.

Under his vision and leadership, Our Community Foundation has spent the past two years creating free programs, sportsfests, wellness activities, and educational workshops designed to empower individuals and families. While rooted in Arizona, the foundation's community spirit has also extended beyond state lines, including a past collaborative event in Cerritos, California, reflecting its growing reach and commitment to building bridges among Filipino American communities.

"This foundation was born from a simple belief that when we give people access to learning, wellness, resources, and a place to belong, we help them rise," said Lago. "Our Community Rising is not just an event. It is a movement of people helping people, families supporting families, and a community coming together with pride, purpose, and hope."

The anniversary event featured a full day of free classes and activities, including voice lessons, drumming, art, Muay Thai, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, basic emergency preparedness, and financial preparedness. The program reflected the foundation's mission to educate, empower, and provide opportunities for all ages.

The celebration was made even more meaningful by the presence of distinguished guests, including Consul General Adelio Cruz of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, who served as keynote speaker, together with his wife, Catherine A. Cruz. Also in attendance was Honorary Consul of the Philippines in Arizona Jenny Ho-Vijungco, showing strong support for Filipino American leadership and unity in Arizona.

A community dinner followed from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., bringing together participants, volunteers, instructors, sponsors, and supporters in a spirit of gratitude and celebration.

As Our Community Foundation enters its third year, its quiet movement continues to rise—building stronger families, promoting healthy living, creating opportunities, and celebrating the strength and pride of the Filipino American spirit.



(L-R): Our Community Foundation officers, Ellen Swing, Edward Lago, Philippine Honorary Consul of Arizona, Jenny Ho Vijungco, and Aice Giddings



Attendees participated in an engaging dance lesson led by Laukau loelu during Our Community Rising 2026. The session encouraged movement, cultural appreciation, and community connection as participants learned new steps in a fun and welcoming environment.



Fua Fa led an interactive drumming lesson during Our Community Rising 2026, introducing participants to the rhythms, techniques, and cultural traditions of percussion. The session fostered creativity, cultural appreciation, and community engagement through the power of music.



What Every Immigrant Needs to Know Before Starting a Business in the United States

For many immigrants, coming to the United States represents an opportunity to build a better future. While finding employment is often the first step, entrepreneurship can provide a pathway to financial independence, community impact, and long-term wealth creation.

The good news is that you do not have to be a U.S. citizen to start a business in the United States. Thousands of immigrants successfully launch and operate businesses every year. However, understanding the process and requirements can save you time, money, and frustration.

1. Choose the Right Business Structure

One of the first decisions you'll make is selecting your business structure. Common options include:

- Sole Proprietorship – Simplest structure for one owner.
- Limited Liability Company (LLC) – Popular choice because it provides liability protection while remaining relatively easy to manage.
- Corporation (S-Corp or C-Corp) – Often used for larger businesses or companies seeking investors.
- Partnership – For businesses with multiple owners.

Many new entrepreneurs choose an LLC because it offers flexibility and personal liability protection.

2. Register Your Business

Depending on your state, you may need to register your business name and entity with the appropriate government agency. Be sure to:

- Verify that your business name is available.
- Register your business entity.
- Obtain any required local licenses or permits.

Requirements vary by state, county, and city.

3. Obtain an EIN (Employer Identification Number)

An EIN is essentially a Social Security Number for your business.

You may need it to:

- Open a business bank account.
- Hire employees.
- File business taxes.
- Apply for business credit.

The IRS issues EINs at no cost.

4. Open a Business Bank Account

Mixing personal and business finances is one of the biggest mistakes new entrepreneurs make.

A dedicated business account helps:

- Track income and expenses.
- Simplify tax preparation.
- Build credibility with customers and lenders.
- Establish business credit.

5. Understand Tax Responsibilities

Every business owner should understand their tax obligations.

You may need to pay:

- Federal taxes
- State taxes
- Sales taxes
- Payroll taxes (if you have employees)

Consulting a CPA or tax professional early can help you avoid costly mistakes.

6. Build Your Business Legally

Depending on your industry, you may need:

- Professional licenses
- Insurance coverage
- Local permits
- Contracts and legal agreements

Taking care of these requirements from the beginning protects your business and your customers.

7. Establish Your Brand and Online Presence

Today's customers often search online before making a purchase.

At a minimum, every business should have:

- A professional logo
- Business cards
- A website or smart page
- Social media profiles
- A Google Business Profile

Your brand is often your first impression—make it count.

8. Network and Build Relationships

Success in America is often built through relationships.

Join:

- Business chambers
- Professional organizations
- Networking groups
- Community associations

Organizations like PACCA provide valuable opportunities to connect with fellow entrepreneurs, learn from experienced business owners, and grow your network.

9. Learn the Local Business Culture

While hard work is important, understanding business etiquette, customer expectations, and communication styles can significantly impact your success.

Take time to:

- Improve your business communication skills.
- Learn industry best practices.
- Seek mentors who have already achieved what you aspire to accomplish.

10. Don't Be Afraid to Start Small

Many successful businesses began as side hustles, home-based operations, or weekend projects. The key is not to wait for perfection.

Start with:

- A clear vision.
- A simple plan.
- Consistent action.

Your first version doesn't have to be perfect—it just needs to begin.

We look forward to continuing this momentum in the months ahead.



WHAT PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY MEANS TO ME *AS A VIETNAMESE MOM*



“Some people celebrate Philippine Independence Day because it's part of their heritage. I celebrate it because it's part of my son's.”

As a Vietnamese mom raising a son who is half Filipino, this day has taken on a very special meaning in my life. It's not just about remembering history or celebrating a nation's independence. For me, it's about honoring my son's identity and making sure he grows up knowing that every part of who he is is something to be proud of.

My son was only six years old when his father passed away. Life changed for both of us in ways we never expected. As I learned to navigate raising him on my own, one thought stayed with me:

How do I make sure he never loses the Filipino side of himself?

I can teach him my Vietnamese traditions because they're part of my everyday life. I can share our language, our food, our family stories, and the values I grew up with. But I also knew that I couldn't teach him everything about being Filipino on my own. That part of him deserved to be nurtured by people who lived it, celebrated it, and loved it.

That's when I realized that it truly takes a community to help raise a child.

This year's Philippine Independence Day Celebration at Saigon Center in Chandler, Arizona reminded me exactly why community matters so much. As we walked through the doors, we were surrounded by music, laughter, colorful traditional attire, cultural performances, and families celebrating together. The room was filled with pride, joy, and a genuine sense of belonging. Watching children perform with confidence and seeing generations gathered together reminded me how culture is passed down—not only through stories, but through shared experiences.

As someone who wasn't born into Filipino culture, I have never felt like I didn't belong. Instead, I've been welcomed with kindness, warmth, and open hearts.

That is one of the things I admire most about the Filipino community. There is a beautiful spirit of hospitality that makes everyone feel like family. Every smile, every conversation, every invitation to participate has reminded me that community is not defined by blood alone. Sometimes, it is defined by the people who choose to embrace you.

They are opportunities for him to experience the traditions, music, dances, food, and values that connect him to his father's heritage. They remind him that being Filipino is something to celebrate proudly. As his mom, watching him grow up surrounded by people who honor that part of his identity brings me so much comfort and joy.

One of my greatest hopes is that he grows up proud of every part of who he is—not just his Vietnamese roots or his Filipino roots, but the unique person he is because of both. I want him to know that he never has to choose between the two. Both cultures are gifts that have shaped his story.



I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Jhen Facto-Aquino, whose dedication, leadership, and countless hours of work made this celebration so meaningful. Your passion for preserving Filipino culture and bringing people together does not go unnoticed. Thank you for creating a space where families like mine feel welcomed and where our children can experience the richness of their heritage.

I also want to recognize the Phoenix Asian American Lions, Leos, and Cubs for your incredible service and commitment to our community. Thank you for supporting events that celebrate culture, encourage unity, and create opportunities for families to connect.

To every volunteer, performer, sponsor, vendor, community partner, and participant—thank you. Whether you were on stage, behind the scenes, setting up chairs, preparing food, organizing activities, or simply showing up to celebrate, you each played a part in making this event special. Your generosity and dedication created memories that will stay with families like mine for years to come.



Sometimes people see an event. I see something much bigger.

I see my son learning about his heritage.

I see a community helping me keep his father's legacy alive.

I see people choosing kindness, inclusion, and love.

Those are gifts that cannot be measured.

So today, as we commemorate the independence of the Philippines, I celebrate something deeply personal—the freedom to embrace every part of my son's identity and the blessing of belonging to a community that has welcomed us with open arms.

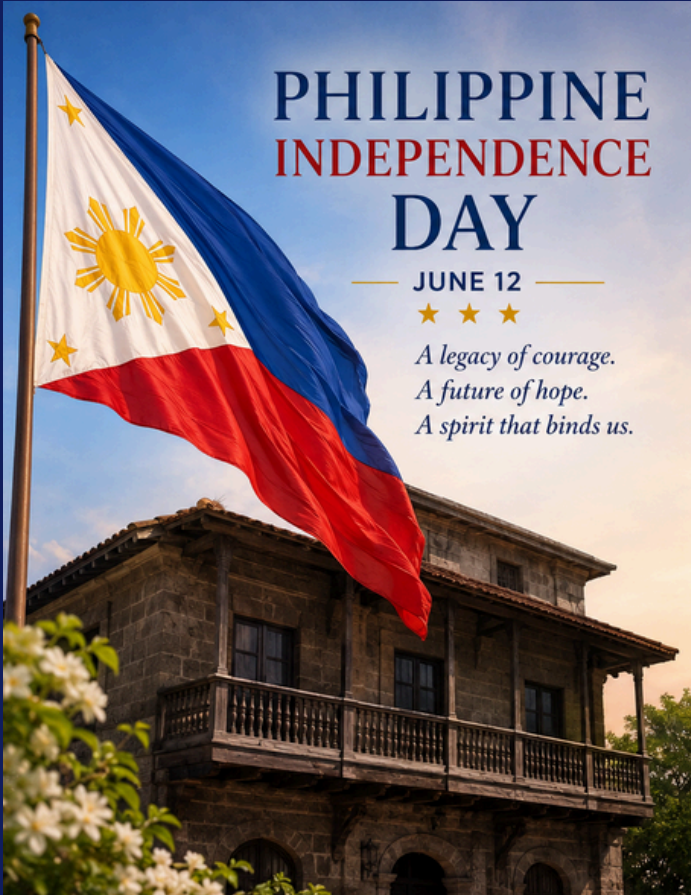
FROM ONE GRATEFUL VIETNAMESE MOTHER TO THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY... MARAMING SALAMAT!

Thank you for helping my son grow up knowing where he comes from, for reminding him that he belongs, and for showing both of us that family is the one we are blessed to have along the way.

HAPPY PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY!



PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY AND **THE SPIRIT THAT BINDS US**



Every **June**, something stirs quietly within us. It's a warmth that is hard to name but impossible to ignore. It rises when we hear the opening bars of Lupang Hinirang, when we see the Philippine flag unfurled against a clear blue sky, when we share a table of lechon and kare-kare with friends who feel like family. For us in the Filipino-American community, here in Arizona and across the United States, June is not just the gateway to summer. June is the month of homecoming.

On **June 12, 1898, General Emilio Aguinaldo** proclaimed the independence of the Philippines from Spanish colonial rule at his home in Kawit, Cavite. Standing on the balcony, with the Philippine flag sewn by Marcela Agoncillo waving above him, and the national anthem played for the very first time, Aguinaldo announced to the world that the Filipino people were a sovereign nation. It was a moment born of sacrifice, courage, and an unrelenting love for a homeland. That declaration echoed across generations and oceans, and it echoes still, wherever Filipinos gather today.

More Than a Date on a Calendar

For many of us who have built our lives here in Arizona, Philippine Independence Day holds a layered meaning. It is a reminder of where we come from — of barrios and barangays, of childhood mornings that smelled like garlic rice and strong coffee, of mano po offered to elders and prayers offered before every meal. It is a celebration of identity that does not diminish with distance or time. In fact, for many of us, that identity grows richer the longer we are away because we begin to understand just how profoundly it has shaped who we are.

As Filipino-Americans, we live at a beautiful and sometimes complex intersection that is deeply rooted in a culture that prizes bayanihan (the spirit of communal unity) and deeply committed to the opportunities of American life. June 12 invites us to draw strength from both.

Bayanihan Lives Here in Arizona

One of the things that fills me with the greatest pride is witnessing how vibrantly the bayanihan spirit thrives within our community here in Arizona. Our members are not simply professionals and business owners, though they are certainly that. They are neighbors who show up, mentors who give generously of their time, advocates who open doors for those coming behind them. They embody the values our parents and grandparents carried from the Philippines — values of hard work, humility, generosity, and resilience — and they translate those values into meaningful service every single day.

Since our founding in 1994, PACCA has been a gathering place for Filipino-Americans who believe that community is not just a word but a practice. Every event we host, every newsletter we publish, every connection we facilitate is an expression of that same bayanihan that our ancestors lived by. And it is alive and well right here in the Arizona desert.

Passing the Torch to the Next Generation

As we celebrate this Independence Day, I find myself thinking most about our young people. The Filipino-American children and young adults who are navigating their identities in a world that moves faster every day are the ones who will carry this heritage forward. It is our responsibility as a community to make sure they do so with pride, with knowledge, and with a deep sense of belonging.

June is a perfect time to share our stories with them. Tell them about June 12, 1898, not just as a history lesson, but as a living story. Tell them about the heroes: about Andres Bonifacio, who ignited the revolution among the masses; about Gabriela Silang, who led troops after her husband's death and became a symbol of Filipino women's courage; about Jose Rizal, whose pen was mightier than any sword and whose execution by colonial authorities only galvanized a nation. Tell them about the ordinary Filipinos who fought for dignity, for sovereignty, for the right to call their land their own. And then tell them: That same spirit is in you.

Let us also create spaces where our young people can discover and celebrate Filipino culture firsthand. Cook with them. Teach them the dances tinikling and pandanggo sa ilaw. Introduce them to the literature, the music, the art. Encourage them to explore Filipino history not as something foreign and distant, but as their inheritance and a gift that no border crossing can ever take away. The pride of being Filipino is not something we need to manufacture. It simply needs to be nurtured.

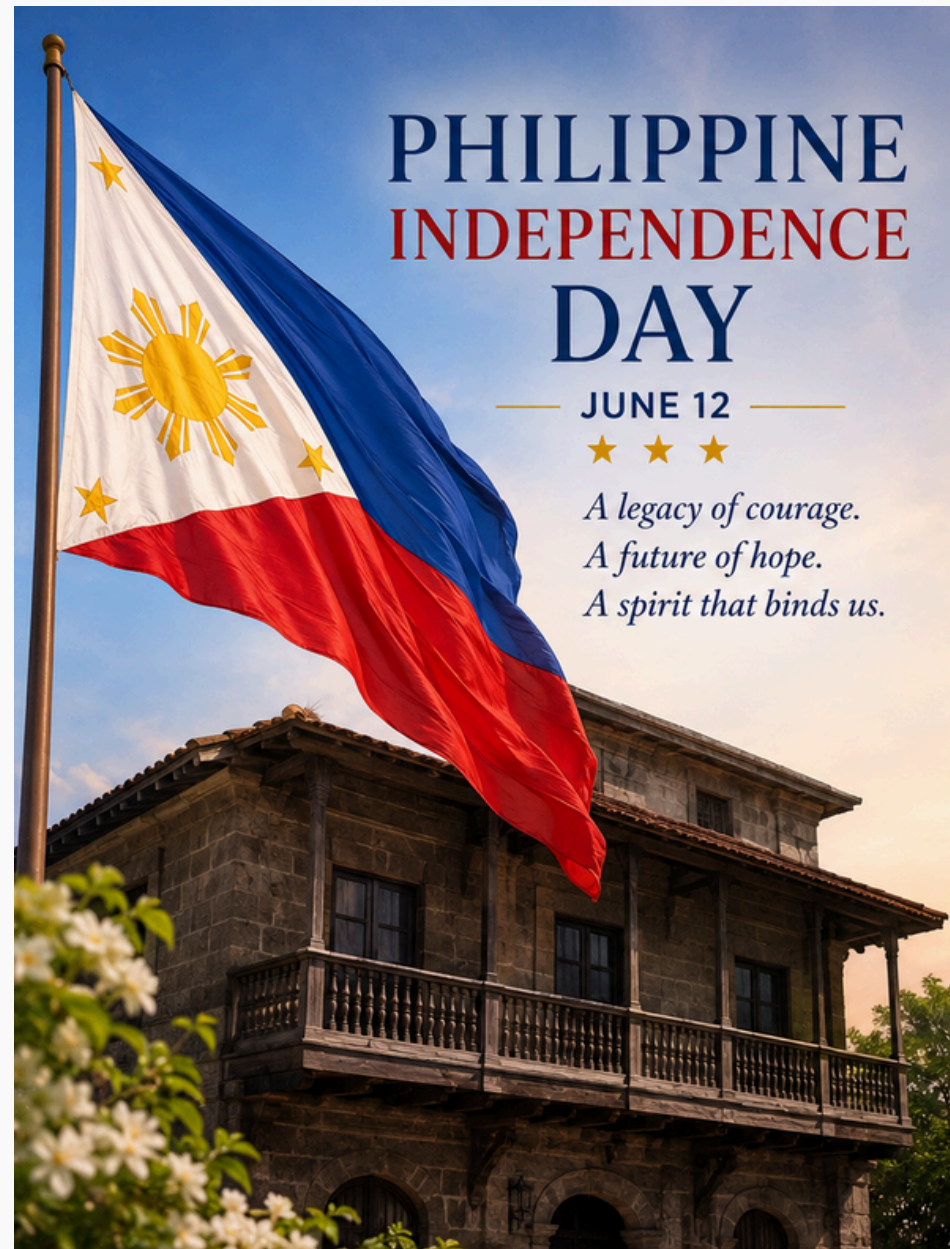


PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY AND *THE SPIRIT THAT BINDS US*

How We Celebrate, Here and Now

Across the country, June brings Filipino-American communities together in joyful celebration. Flag-raising ceremonies, fiestas brimming with food and music, cultural performances, and parades mark the occasion with color and pride. Here in Arizona, our community comes together in its own beautiful way. We celebrate in community halls and backyards, in restaurants and parks, in the warmth of gatherings that feel both familiar and sacred. Each of these celebrations, large or small, is an act of love for the Philippines, for our community, and for one another.

This June, I encourage every PACCA member and every friend of our community to mark Independence Day with intentionality. Fly the Philippine flag alongside the American flag because both represent who we are. Share a Filipino dish with a neighbor who has never tasted adobo or sinigang and watch their eyes light up. Attend a community event and reconnect with friends you have not seen since the last gathering. Support a Filipino-owned business in Arizona and remind them that they are not alone in building their dreams. Every small act of community is a celebration in itself.



A Personal Reflection

I want to be honest with you, as I always try to be in this space. There are moments, in the busyness of everyday life, when our heritage quietly recedes into the background. The deadlines, the commutes, the responsibilities of work and family fill our days so completely that sometimes we forget to stop and remember. June 12 is my personal invitation, and I hope yours too, to come back to the center. To remember not just where we come from, but why it matters.

It matters because our identity gives us strength. The Filipino values of pagmamahal sa pamilya (love of family), utang na loob (debt of gratitude), pakikipagkapwa-tao (shared humanity), and the enduring bayanihan spirit are not relics of the past. They are living principles that guide us in how we treat our colleagues, our neighbors, our community, and ourselves. They make us not just better Filipinos, but better human beings.

The Flag We Carry Within Us

There is something uniquely powerful about the Philippine flag in the way its three colors tell a complete story. The blue stripe stands for peace, truth, and justice. The red stripe represents patriotism and valor. The white triangle at its center symbolizes equality and fraternity, and at its heart, the golden sun with eight rays honors the eight provinces that first rose up against colonial rule. The three stars represent Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao... bound together as one nation.

I think about that flag often. I think about what it means to carry it within us as we go about our lives in Arizona. Every Filipino-American who lives with integrity, who gives back, who mentors another, who stands up for what is right are honoring that flag. They are proving, in the most personal and powerful way possible, that the values it represents are not confined to one archipelago in Southeast Asia. They travel. They endure. They flourish, wherever Filipinos call home.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas. Mabuhay ang PACCA.

This June, let us celebrate Philippine Independence Day not only as a commemoration of history, but as a renewal of our commitment to the values that brought our community to life. Fly the Philippine flag. Share a Filipino dish with a neighbor who has never tasted adobo or sinigang. Attend a community gathering. Support a Filipino-owned business. Every small act of community is a celebration in itself.

Let us celebrate with joy, with pride, and with the open hearts that Filipinos are known for the world over. Mabuhay!



ALPHA PHI OMEGA ACNA & OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Bring Hope Across the Philippines Through Humanitarian Missions, Outreach, and Fellowship

A JOURNEY OF LEADERSHIP, FRIENDSHIP, AND SERVICE REACHES COMMUNITIES FROM BAGUIO TO BORACAY, AKLAN, AND CEBU

The Alpha Phi Omega Alumni Council of North America (ACNA) continued its mission of service beyond borders through a series of humanitarian missions, educational initiatives, community outreach programs, and fellowship activities throughout the Philippines in May 2026.

Under the leadership of ACNA President Art Rivera, together with ACNA 1st Vice President Edward Lago, ACNA brought together APO brothers and sisters, alumni associations, healthcare professionals, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners united by the principles of Leadership, Friendship, and Service.

Through collaboration across North America and the Philippines, these initiatives demonstrated the power of unity and the impact created when communities come together with a shared purpose.



With Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong

ACNA BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM SUPPORTS STUDENTS IN BAGUIO CITY



The service journey began on May 8, 2026, in Baguio City through ACNA's Back-to-School Program, supporting education and recognizing the achievements of the top 100 students of Baguio City High School.

This initiative was held in collaboration with APO Baguio-Benguet Alumni Association, APO Gamma Pi Alumni Association and residents, and APO Golf Club USA, bringing together APO brothers and sisters in support of youth development and education.



Representing ACNA were President Art Rivera, 1st Vice President Edward Lago, APO Arizona Treasurer Ditdit Maynard, APO Arizona Auditor Francis Cuvin, ACNA Co-Organizer Edgar Ninofranco, and Past ACNA President Lito Tarculas.

The ACNA delegation was warmly welcomed by Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong and Vice Mayor Faustino Olowan during a courtesy visit, recognizing ACNA's commitment to building partnerships and serving communities. The initiative reflected ACNA's dedication to supporting education, recognizing excellence, and empowering future generations.



ALPHA PHI OMEGA ACNA & OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Bring Hope Across the Philippines Through Humanitarian Missions, Outreach, and Fellowship

ACNA LEADS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN MEDICAL DENTAL OPTICAL MISSION IN BORACAY

On **May 14, 2026**, ACNA continued its service mission with the **International Humanitarian Medical Dental Optical (IHMDO) Mega Service Mission at Balabag Elementary School in Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan.**

The mission was held in collaboration with **APO Philippines Incorporated, APO Boracay Alumni Association, APO National Service for Health**, and in partnership with **Unciano College of Dentistry.**

Under the leadership of **ACNA President Art Rivera**, ACNA **1st Vice President** and **IHMDO Service Chairman Edward Lago**, Philippines IHMDO Chairman **Dr. Edna Corpuz Navallo**, and IHMDO Co-Chair **Brod Clyde**, the project brought together doctors, dentists, nurses, volunteers, sponsors, and APO brothers and sisters to provide essential services to the community.

Representing ACNA during the Boracay mission were President Art Rivera, 1st Vice President Edward Lago, APO Arizona Treasurer Ditdit Maynard, APO Arizona Auditor Francis Cuvin, ACNA Co-Organizer Edgar Ninofranco, together with members of the APO Alumni Associations of North America who joined in support of the outreach.

Through teamwork and dedication, the mission successfully served **1,380** individuals through:

- **Dental Services – 201 patients**
- **Circumcision Services – 345 individuals**
- **Medical Consultations – 157 patients**
- **Blood Typing – 193 individuals**
- **Free Haircuts – 104 individuals**
- **School Supplies – 236 students**
- **Free Eyeglasses**
- **Free Legal Services**
- **Children's Gift Giving**
- **Additional community assistance programs**



With the Pharmaceutical Team



With the Back to School Program Team



With the Dental Team



With the Doctors and Circumcision Team



APO ACNA President Art Rivera and 1st Vice President & Service Chairman Edward Lago

ACNA extended its appreciation to Dr. Edna Corpuz Navallo for leading the coordination in the Philippines, together with IHMDO Co-Chair Brod Clyde, Team Dr. Yoya Tarriela and Unciano College, Sis Jeanette Cortum, Delta Kappa for the circumcision services, healthcare professionals, volunteers, sponsors, donors, and all brods and sisses who contributed to the success of the mission. Special recognition was also given to APO Philippines Incorporated National President Brod Atty. Fritz, APO Boracay Alumni Association President Brod Marben Madrones, and all leaders and partners who helped bring this humanitarian mission together.



ALPHA PHI OMEGA ACNA & OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Bring Hope Across the Philippines Through Humanitarian Missions, Outreach, and Fellowship

ACNA PARTNERS WITH INTERNATIONAL CARE MINISTRIES TO SERVE FAMILIES IN IBAJAY

On May 15, 2026, ACNA continued its commitment to service through a collaboration with International Care Ministries (ICM) in Iba Jay, Aklan.

Representing ACNA during the outreach were President Art Rivera, 1st Vice President Edward Lago, APO Arizona Auditor Francis Cuvin, ACNA Co-Organizer Edgar Ninofranco, and APO Mississauga President Glory Pisuenra.

The outreach supported underserved communities by celebrating the graduation of participants from ICM's community program and providing food supplies to families in need.

The initiative reflected ACNA's continued mission of extending compassion, building partnerships, and creating meaningful change.



APO CARES | OCF CARES BRINGS SUPPORT TO MANDAUE CITY FAMILIES

On May 22, 2026, the spirit of service continued in Central Visayas through APO Cares | OCF Cares, a collaboration between ACNA, Our Community Foundation, and APO Central Visayas Administrative Region (CVAR).

Under the leadership of ACNA President Art Rivera, together with ACNA 1st Vice President Edward Lago, who also serves as Founder and President of Our Community Foundation, the organizations partnered with APO CVAR under the leadership of Regional Director Brod Wendell



Castro, with the support and coordination of Brod Neil Lozano and dedicated CVAR brothers and sisters.

Held in Barangay Looc, Mandaue City, the outreach provided school supplies to 200 students and distributed care packages and food supplies to 200 families.

The project demonstrated how teamwork, compassion, and collaboration can bring organizations together to create a greater impact.





ALPHA PHI OMEGA ACNA & OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Bring Hope Across the Philippines Through Humanitarian Missions, Outreach, and Fellowship

OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND APO CVAR SPORTSFEST PROMOTES FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY

On May 23–24, 2026, Our Community Foundation, led by Founder and President Edward Lago, partnered with APO Central Visayas Administrative Region for Sportsfest 2026 at Warehouse Sports Club in Mandaue City, Cebu.

Through the leadership and support of APO CVAR Regional Director Brod Wendell Castro and Sportsfest Chairman Brod Neil Lozano, the event brought together APO brothers, sisters, families, and friends to celebrate fellowship, wellness, and unity.

The Sportsfest featured basketball, volleyball, pickleball, badminton, and billiards, creating opportunities to build friendships and strengthen brotherhood.

The event was honored by the presence of Cebu City Mayor and Alpha Mu Brod Nestor Archival,



OUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS CEBU CITY COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE



Continuing its commitment to serving communities beyond organized events, Our Community Foundation extended its support to Cebu City Mayor Nestor Archival's community assistance initiative by providing coffee, snacks, and other refreshments for families during their time of loss.

The donations were given to support families holding wakes for their departed loved ones, offering a small gesture of comfort, care, and compassion during difficult moments.

This initiative reflected the importance of community support and the shared mission of helping others not only during major outreach programs but also during personal moments when families need encouragement and support.

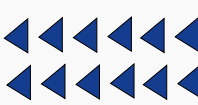
Through partnerships with leaders and organizations who share the same vision, Our Community Foundation continues to support programs that uplift communities and provide help where it is needed most.

ONE MISSION. MANY COMMUNITIES. ONE PURPOSE

From Baguio to Boracay, Ibaday to Cebu, these initiatives demonstrated the impact created when leaders, volunteers, organizations, and communities unite.

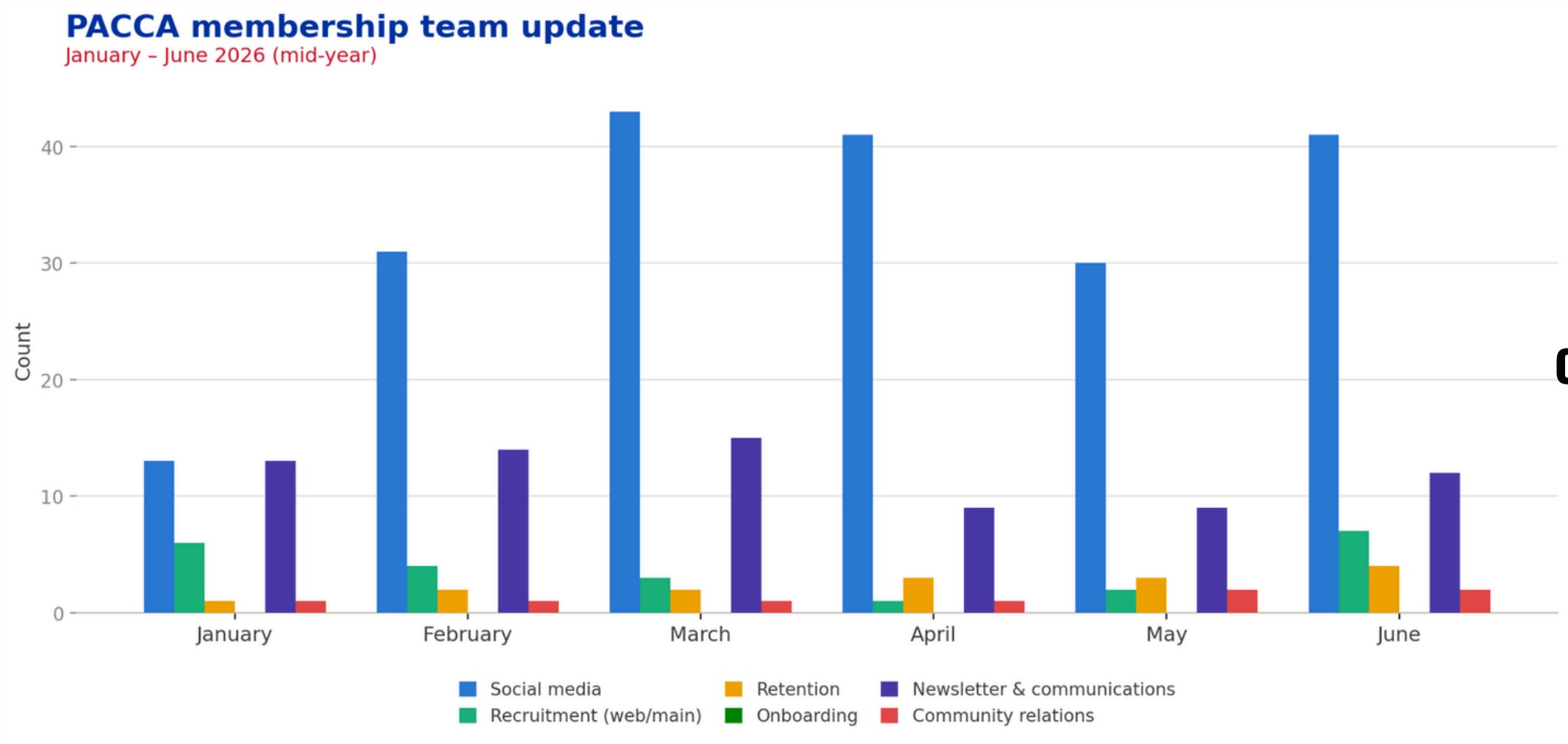
Through Leadership, Friendship, and Service, ACNA, Our Community Foundation, and all partners continue to prove that service has no boundaries.

***Together, we are stronger. Together, we serve greater.
May We Always Be.***



PACCA Membership *Ambassadors Team* Update

A Mid-Year Look Back, January-June 2026



We're halfway through 2026, and the PACCA Membership Team's monthly numbers give us a good checkpoint on where the chamber's energy has been going and where it's headed next.

Social media remains our biggest engine.

After peaking at 43 posts and high interactions in March, activity dipped to 30 in May before climbing back to 41 in June. This is proof that this channel keeps drawing strong, consistent engagement from our members. These figures reflect activity across Instagram, the PACCA Members Facebook Page, and the PACCA Main Facebook Page.

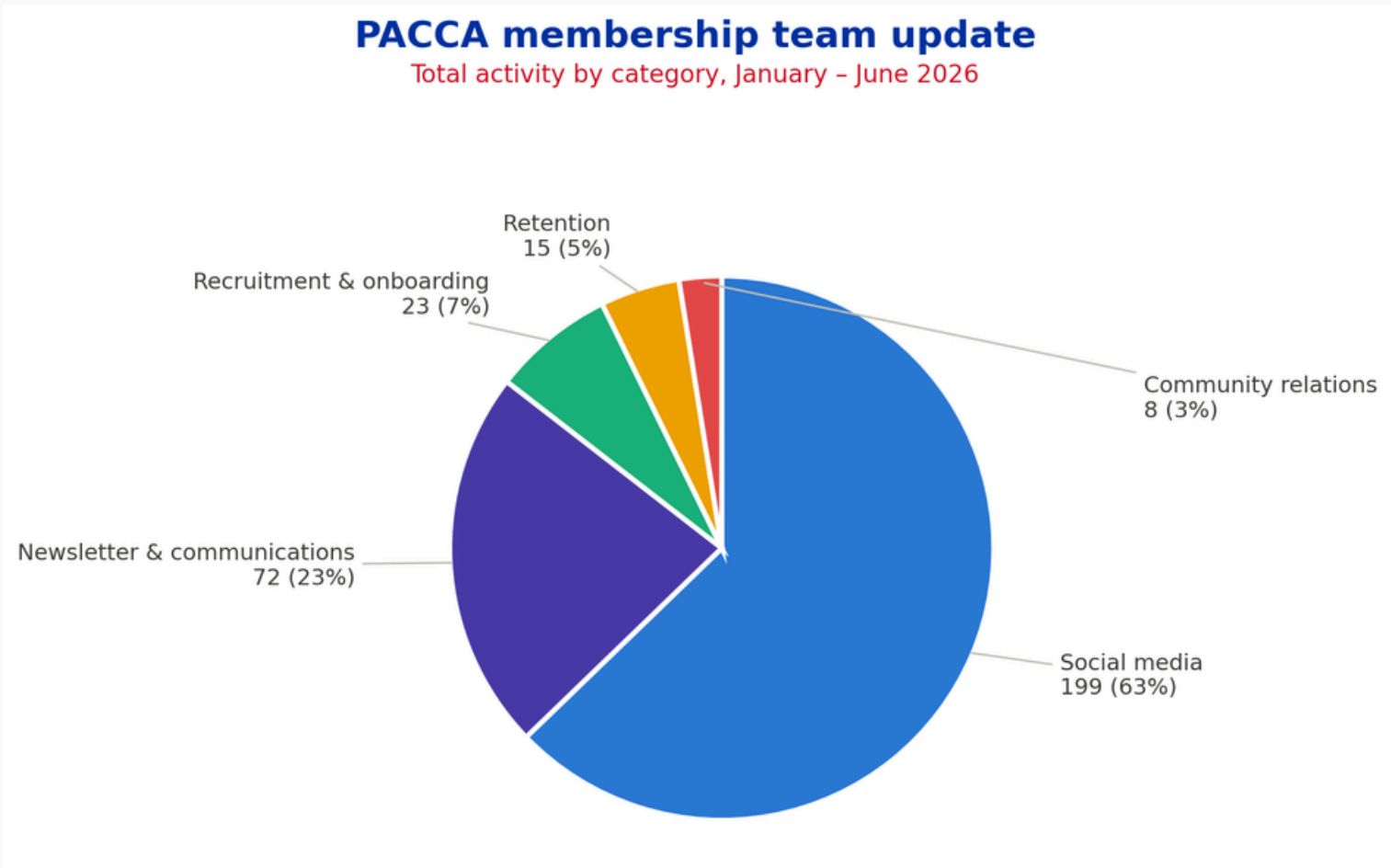
Recruitment bounced back in a big way.

After tapering to just 1–2 touchpoints in April and May, recruitment jumped to 7 in June (its strongest month of the year), a promising sign heading into the second half. Retention keeps climbing.

Retention touchpoints have grown steadily all year, from 1 in January to 4 in June, our highest mark yet. Community relations held its steady presence too, staying at 2 for a second month.

Newsletter and communications picked back up.

After easing to 9 touchpoints in April and May, this channel rose to 12 in June. Onboarding, meanwhile, has recorded zero activity every month this year — a number worth a closer look with the team, since it likely points to a reporting gap rather than an actual pause in welcoming new members.



Thank you to our Membership Ambassadors for a strong first half of the year. Here's to carrying this momentum through the rest of 2026!



WOMEN WHO RISE: Real Stories of Resilience, Leadership & Empowerment



Chandler, AZ — On June 11, 2026, the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (PACCA) brought together professionals, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and aspiring changemakers for an inspiring evening of empowerment through its signature event, Women Who Rise: Real Stories of Resilience, Leadership & Empowerment.

More than a networking event, Women Who Rise served as a platform for authentic conversations about the journeys behind success: the struggles, sacrifices, resilience, and purpose that shape extraordinary leaders.

The evening featured an accomplished panel of women leaders, including Dr. Vivian Valenty, Dr. Mele Kramer, and Dr. Loan Dao, who shared candid reflections on the challenges they faced before achieving professional success. Through personal stories of perseverance, determination, and growth, attendees gained valuable insights into what it truly means to lead with courage and purpose.

Guided by moderators Coco Gonzales and Vanessa Guido, the discussion explored themes that resonated deeply with the audience: resilience in the face of adversity, leadership through service, empowering other women, and the importance of creating a lasting legacy.



The program concluded with an inspirational message from Chandler Vice Mayor & Councilmember Christine Ellis whose remarks reinforced the importance of leadership, civic engagement, and service. She challenged attendees to invest in the next generation by ensuring that **every girl in our community has access to education**, encouragement, and opportunities to succeed. Emphasizing that young girls are the future leaders, innovators, and changemakers of tomorrow, her message served as a powerful reminder that empowering women begins by supporting and educating the next generation.

The event's theme was evident throughout the evening. The stories shared were not simply about achievements or titles; they were about resilience. They were about transforming obstacles into opportunities and turning challenges into purpose.

As I reflected on the evening's conversations, I was reminded of a passage from Genesis describing the creation of woman from the rib of man. As both a Christian and a Biology graduate, I find it fascinating that the rib is one of the few bones in the human body with a remarkable ability to heal and regenerate. Whether viewed symbolically or scientifically, it serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience of women and their ability to rebuild, restore, and rise above life's challenges while continuing to nurture their families, businesses, and communities.

For many attendees, the event served as both an inspiration and a reminder that leadership is not defined solely by position or recognition. Leadership is found in the courage to persevere, the willingness to serve others, and the commitment to continue growing despite life's difficulties.

As the evening concluded, participants left with renewed motivation, meaningful connections, and a deeper appreciation for the women whose leadership continues to shape businesses, organizations, and communities throughout Arizona and beyond.

PACCA remains committed to fostering professional development, entrepreneurship, leadership, and community engagement through programs that educate, connect, and empower. The success of Women Who Rise stands as a testament to the power of authentic storytelling and the impact that resilient women leaders can have on future generations.

Together, we celebrate the women who rise, the lives they impact, and the communities they inspire.



PACCA UPCOMING EVENT

The Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona) is inviting the community to a special evening of learning, connection, and practical legal insight through its upcoming **LEGALLY SPEAKING: Community Legal Panel & Networking Event**, happening on **July 9, 2026 in Scottsdale**.

This event is designed to make legal topics feel more approachable and relevant to everyday life whether you're a business owner, professional, or simply planning ahead for your family's future.

You'll hear from experienced attorneys who will break down key areas of law in a way that's clear and useful, including estate planning, immigration law, personal injury claims, and business & contract law. It's a chance to ask real questions, gain clarity, and walk away with information you can actually use not just theory.

What makes this evening even more meaningful is the opportunity to connect with others in the community. It's not just a panel, it's also a networking space where conversations happen naturally and relationships are built over shared learning.

What makes this evening even more meaningful is the opportunity to connect with others in the community. It's not just a panel, it's also a networking space where conversations happen naturally and relationships are built over shared learning.



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LEGALLY SPEAKING

Community Legal Panel & Networking Event

 THURSDAY JULY 9, 2026

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ELSA LANDEROS Estate Planning Attorney	KELSEY ZUBKOFF As Seen on 90 Day Fiance: Immigration Law	ERIK L. MULLINS Personal Injury Law	JOHN KANG Managing Attorney
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WELCOME TO PACCA!

Welcome to PACCA: Katreya Castro

Licensed Real Estate Agent | Keller Williams Professional Partners

PACCA is excited to welcome Katreya, a dedicated and client-focused real estate professional with a passion for helping individuals and families find not just a house, but a place they can truly call home.

As a Licensed Real Estate Agent with Keller Williams Professional Partners, Katreya brings strong industry knowledge, a service-driven mindset, and a commitment to guiding clients through every step of the buying and selling process with care and integrity. Her approach is rooted in building trust, understanding client needs, and delivering results with professionalism and heart.

Katreya’s work reflects the values of connection and community helping people make confident real estate decisions while ensuring they feel supported throughout the journey. Her presence in the industry contributes to creating stronger neighborhoods and more informed homeowners.

We are thrilled to have Katreya join the PACCA network of professionals and community leaders. Her expertise in real estate adds meaningful value to our growing circle of members across business and service industries.

Welcome to PACCA, Katreya!



Welcome to PACCA: Sebrena Tranton

Financial Advisor | Edward Jones | Community-Focused Wealth Partner

PACCA is honored to welcome Sebrena, a dedicated Financial Advisor whose work is deeply grounded in trust, service, and a genuine commitment to helping individuals and families build long-term financial confidence.

As a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, Sebrena takes a highly personalized approach to financial planning—focusing on each client’s unique needs, wants, and wishes. Her philosophy is centered on putting clients first, building relationships rooted in trust, and guiding families toward meaningful financial wellness with clarity and care. Sebrena brings over 20 years of professional experience across technology, banking, and software systems, supported by strong academic foundations in financial management and software systems development. This diverse background strengthens her ability to approach financial planning with both analytical expertise and a people-centered perspective. Her personal journey as part of an immigrant family who rebuilt their lives in the United States reflects resilience, gratitude, and a deep appreciation for community support. These values continue to guide her commitment to giving back and empowering others to achieve stability and growth.

At the heart of Sebrena’s work is a belief that financial wellness is built through understanding, trust, and shared purpose. She is passionate about helping clients feel confident in their financial decisions while supporting their long-term goals and aspirations. We are proud to welcome Sebrena Tranton into the PACCA community of professionals and leaders who are committed to service, impact, and empowerment.

Welcome to PACCA, Sebrena!



Welcome to PACCA: Jennie Kerry

Wellness Entrepreneur | One Stop Nutrition® Partner | Health & Lifestyle Advocate

PACCA is excited to welcome Jennie, a wellness-driven entrepreneur dedicated to helping individuals make healthier choices that are both enjoyable and sustainable.

Through her work with One Stop Nutrition®, Jennie is part of a mission-centered space that brings together great taste and intentional living offering smoothies, premium supplements, vitamins, energy drinks, and healthy snacks all in one place. Her focus is on making wellness simple, accessible, and enjoyable for everyday life.

Jennie’s approach reflects a belief that health is not about restriction, but about balance, energy, and consistency. Whether supporting fitness goals, boosting daily energy, or encouraging better habits, she is committed to helping people feel their best from the inside out.

Her passion for wellness and community aligns strongly with PACCA’s mission of uplifting professionals and entrepreneurs who create meaningful impact through their work and service.

We are thrilled to welcome Jennie Kerry into the PACCA community of leaders, builders, and wellness advocates.

Welcome to PACCA, Jennie!





Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (PACCA)

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026 EDITION

Facebook | Instagram | LinkedIn
<https://paccaz.org>



FINAL THOUGHTS

As we close out this March edition, we are reminded that the strength of our community lies in our shared commitment to growth, collaboration, and service. Each story, event, and milestone featured this month reflects the vibrant spirit of PACCA—a community built on connection and driven by purpose.

From empowering entrepreneurs to celebrating culture and supporting one another through meaningful initiatives, PACCA continues to serve as a bridge for opportunity and impact. For over three decades, the organization has remained dedicated to fostering relationships, supporting businesses, and uplifting the Filipino-American community in Arizona and beyond.

As we look ahead to the coming months, we are excited for what's to come—especially our upcoming Ceremonial Turnover & Induction of Officers and New Members, where we will celebrate leadership, welcome new members, and continue building a stronger future together.

Let us carry forward the spirit of bayanihan—working together, supporting one another, and creating opportunities not just for ourselves, but for the generations to come.

Thank you for being part of PACCA. Together, we grow stronger.

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Our Virtual Professionals

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PACCA Members and Community Partners

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Our Virtual Professionals

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- **Vice President for Membership:** Kristine Bartolome
- **Vice President for Events:** Cabrina Le Sampaga
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SHARE YOUR STORY WITH PACCA

Every PACCA story begins with people — our entrepreneurs, families, leaders, and community builders. The moments we share, the businesses we grow, and the culture we carry forward are what truly connect us.

We invite you to submit an article, share a personal story, or highlight a business, initiative, or meaningful moment that reflects the heart of our Filipino-American community.

From milestones and community impact to cultural celebrations and quiet wins worth celebrating, your story helps shape who we are and where we're going.



Send your submission to:

kristine@ourcommunitymortgage.com

LET'S CONTINUE BUILDING THE PACCA STORY — TOGETHER.

Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Arizona (PACCA)



Stay Connected with Us!

Follow PACCA on social media for the latest updates, events, and community highlights — and visit our website for exclusive resources and news.

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