



COMMUNITY HONORS. The Lee's Association Dragon & Lion Dance Team (top left photo) kicked off festivities at The Asian Reporter Foundation's 17th Annual Scholarship & Awards Banquet. In addition to performances, the evening featured the 2015 Most Honored Elder awards (top right photo) and the issuing of Asian Reporter Foundation scholarships (bottom right photo). Pictured at bottom left are performers with Halau Hula Kaleinani o ke Kukui, a program of the Ke Kukui Foundation.



Annual AR Foundation banquet honors members of the Asian community

By **Kate Hubbard**
The Asian Reporter

Approximately 350 members of the community spent an evening last month at the Asian Reporter Foundation's Scholarship & Awards Banquet. As guests arrived for the social hour, volunteers extended warm welcomes while ushering them to their tables, which featured lush bouquets and decadent place settings. A whole roasted pig on display near the silent auction tables and a photo booth was a sure sign the night was going to be fun and delicious.

A boisterous performance by the Lee's Association Dragon & Lion Dance Team provided a thunderous start to the evening's ceremonies. Lions became as cuddly as kittens in the hands of the skilled dancers who maneuvered the beasts on the stage and around the tables of banquet-goers.

The presentations were guided by master of ceremonies Zeke Smith. Dolly Specht delivered a beautiful invocation, inviting guests to honor the knowledge and wisdom of our elders. The food soon started flowing to the tables — a mouthwatering array of yakisoba noodles, macaroni salad, shoyu chicken, kalua pig, teriyaki beef, and rice. While the room hummed with the sounds of silverware and happy eating, Smith kept the crowd entertained.

Following remarks by Asian Reporter publisher Jaime Lim, the foundation's Most Honored Elders were introduced — each with their inspiring life story. This year's awardees ranged in age from 70 to 79 years old, adding up to centuries of incredible personal experiences and achievements. The 2015 recipients included Luz Aviles, Sho Dozono, John Lim, and Angie Turla.

The elders were followed to the stage by this year's accomplished young scholars. The Asian Reporter Foundation, the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO), and generous sponsors worked together to award \$20,000 in scholarships.

As the young people were introduced, the audience heard an impressive list of extracurricular activities, community service, and other accomplishments for each. Higher education can be expensive; these hardworking students deserve all the help the community can provide.

While waiting to have her name read, PACCO scholar Dessa Salavedra said, "We're very thankful for the awards, because without a scholarship like this, we cannot afford to further our education."

While guests dined and sipped beverages, members of Halau Hula Kaleinani o ke Kukui, a program of the Ke Kukui Foundation, took the stage. The dancers spread some tropical sunshine and happiness with Hawaiian and

Polynesian performances.

The final ceremony of the evening was the presentation of the Exemplary Community Volunteer Effort awards, which honor organizations that work very hard to preserve cultural traditions and enhance the world around us. The two groups recognized this year were the Philippine Nurses Association of Oregon & Washington (PNAOW) and the Van Lang Vietnamese School.

As the evening neared its end, people vying for silent auction items found out what they won. The bidding was active all evening on many different items — wine tours, weekends getaways, sports jackets, a home-cooked native Hawaiian dinner, a signed Timbers jersey, and more. While people purchased their auction items and danced to tunes spun by DJ Music By Listening Man, 50 guests were treated to surprise scratch-it tickets provided by the Oregon Lottery.

The Asian Reporter Foundation's 17th annual awards event was a great opportunity to dress up a little, recognize individuals and groups in the Asian community, and have some fun. Combined with the delectable food and great cultural entertainment, it was a lovely evening out. In January of next year, look for nomination forms and scholarship applications for the 2016 event, and we'll see you next April!

The Asian Reporter Foundation extends many thanks to our banquet sponsors. Without them, this annual event would not be possible.

