



CELEBRATING

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**30 YEARS**

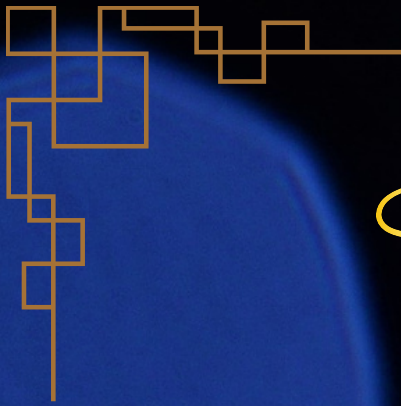
BURMESE COMMUNITY IN CENTRAL INDIANA

**CELEBRATING OUR THIRTY YEARS  
OF DIVERSITY & COLLECTIVE SUCCESS, EMBRACING  
THE FUTURE OF UNITY FOR THE GREATER GOOD**

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**September 28, 2023  
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA**

Celebration Committee  
Burmese American Community Institute



# PROGRAM AGENDA

## COMMUNITY AWARDS DINNER

30 YEARS OF BURMESE COMMUNITY IN CENTRAL INDIANA

DATE: THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

VENUE: CEBC LIFE CENTER

5610 S MERIDIAN STREET, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46217

- 05:30 PM DOORS OPEN
- 06:00 PM DINNER SERVED (MUSIC)
- 06:25 PM WELCOMING REMARKS BY ELAISA VAHNIÉ
- 06:30 PM KEYNOTE SPEECH (VIDEO) BY GOVERNOR ERIC  
HOLCOMB, GOVERNOR OF INDIANA
- 06:35 PM REMARKS BY SECRETARY DIEGO MORALES,  
INDIANA SECRETARY OF STATE
- 06:40 PM FIRST 30 PERSONS HONOREES
- 07:00 PM COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS
- 07:20 PM PRESENTATION OF AWARDS  
FIRST PERSON ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS  
(EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL CAREER)  
FIRST PERSON ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (BUSINESS)  
MOST OUTSTANDING PERSON AWARDS
- 07:40 PM CULTURAL FASHION
- 07:50 PM EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS
- 07:55 PM CLOSING REMARKS BY DR. RO DING
- 08:00 PM BENEDICTION BY REV. DR. STEPHEN HRE KIO

SPECIAL REMARKS BY  
SENATOR TODD YOUNG, MARTIN BAIER, DR. PATRICK SPRAY, ANDREW  
KOCHER AND DR. MIGUEL E. AYLLON

MUSIC BY  
AATA VAN, EMILY NGUN HLEI SUNG, MELODY ACADEMY & JAZZ BAND  
(UINDY)

CULTURAL FASHION SHOW BY  
BACI UPWARD COLLEGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

# IN GRATITUDE

**INDIANAPOLIS, September 28, 2023** - America: Land of the Free, Home of the Brave. Many refugees, who flee from the dangers of their homeland, risk their lives to enter the United States in hope of a better future. The United States, known for being the world leader in responding to emerging global issues, including providing refugee protection and humanitarian assistance, has welcomed more than 3.5 million immigrants with open arms since 1975. More than 188,095 Burmese refugees have been admitted to the U.S. since 2000. More than 40,000 Burmese reside in Indiana and approximately 30,000 are calling Indianapolis their new home. The overall Burmese population in the U.S. is estimated to be 317,000.

The college-going rate among the Burmese in the U.S. has increased from 43 percent in 2013 to 93.3 percent in 2022. These achievements are a reflection of the American leadership, compassion, and the giving of hope to many, including thousands of Burmese. We are thankful for the hospitality of the American people, especially Hoosiers, and always grateful for the opportunity to be part of this vibrant community.



*Keynote Speaker*  
*Eric Holcomb*  
*Governor of Indiana*



# OFFICIAL SPONSORS

## BACI

Burmese American Community Institute

Advocating • Connecting • Educating • Serving

## EVENT SPONSORS



## ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS



# FIRST PERSON AWARDS

## FIRST 30 BURMESE IN CENTRAL INDIANA

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring the first 30 persons who resettled in Central Indiana from  
Myanmar (Burma).*

*John Matlei Cinzah, M.P. (dec.)*

*Ruby Sing, Ph.D. (dec.)*

*Pudjee Myint*

*Rose Khin Sann Myint*

*Tun Myint, Ph.D.*

*Andrew Ngun Cung Lian, S.J.D.*

*Apryl Thint T. Cho, M.S.*

*Daniel Sakhong*

*Kyaw Kyaw Htunt*

*Mang Ceu Lian*

*Rev. Dr. Thlaawr Bawihrin*

*Shane Myint*

*Thang Lian Mang*

*Zaw Win Hlaing*

*Salai Aung Gyaw*

*Van Tuah Piang*

*Dr. Tetlu Myint, D.D.S.*

*Israeli Piang*

*Zapeng Sakhong*

*Albert Kap*

*Blessly Aphia Kap*

*Cherry Ania Kap*

*Johnny Andi Kap*

*Thla Hei*

*Van Cer Par (dec.)*

*Disclaimer: The Celebration Committee has put every effort to collect and confirm the information on honorees in each category during the process of organizing this event. Any inaccurate or incomplete information is unintentional and the committee is willing to amend any errors when furnished with updated information.*

# FIRST PERSON AWARDS

## FIRST PERSON ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER)

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring the individuals from Central Indiana for their outstanding achievements in education and professional careers as the first persons and forerunners in their respective fields.*

**Nunmawi Bualteng**  
*as the first person to attain a Nursing Degree and to become a Nurse Practitioner in the Burmese Community and for your educational and career achievements*

**Ral Lian Khum**  
*as the first person to receive a Gates Millenium Scholarship in the Burmese Community and for your educational achievement*

**Bawi Lian**  
*as the first Police Officer in the Burmese Community*

**Shing Mang**  
*as the first Engineer in the Burmese Community*

**Rev. Hre Mang, Ph.D.**  
*as the first Publicly Elected Official in the Burmese Community*

**Dr. Tetlu Myint**  
*as the first Doctor of Dental Surgery in the Burmese Community*

**Tun Myint, Ph.D.**  
*as the first person to receive a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree in the Burmese Community and for your outstanding educational achievements*

**Dr. Irene Nunuk**  
*as the first Medical Doctor in the Burmese Community*

**Van Tuah Piang**  
*as the first person to serve in Public Service as a career in the Burmese Community*

**Lun Kham Pieper**  
*as the first Licensed Attorney in the Burmese Community*

**Rome Thalop**  
*as the youngest person to start a Business in the Burmese Community*

**San Hlei Thang**  
*as the first Licensed Realtor in the Burmese Community*

**Hlawn Kip Tlem**  
*as the first person to receive a Lilly Scholarship in the Burmese Community and for your educational achievement*

**Van Ceu Uk**  
*as the first person to receive an Associate Degree in the Burmese Community and for your educational achievement*

# FIRST PERSON AWARDS

## FIRST PERSON ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (BUSINESS)

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring the individuals from Central Indiana for their outstanding achievements in their respective areas of business or expertise.*

**Peter Aung**

*as the first person to start a Postal Service Business "Postal Express" in the Burmese Community*

**Henry Bachit**

*as the first person to start an Automotive Service Business "Henry Bachit Auto Repair" in the Burmese Community*

**Nguncer Bualteng**

*as the first person to start a Real Estate and Insurance Business "Mang Tha Real Estate" and "Mang Tha Insurance" in the Burmese Community*

**Than Hre**

*as the first person to start a Restaurant Business "Chin Brothers Restaurant" in the Burmese Community*

**Burmese American Community Institute**  
*as the first 501c(3) Non-Profit Organization in the Burmese Community*

**Biak Tial**

*as the first person to start a Grocery Business "Center Grocery" in the Burmese Community*

**Chin TV International Inc.**

*as the first Media Entertainment in the Burmese Community*

**Lai Lung Lian**

*as the first person to start a Music Academy Business "Melody Music Academy" in the Burmese Community*

**Esther Mang**

*as the first person to start a Beauty Salon Business "Dingdi Salon" in the Burmese Community*

**Julie Mawi**

*as the first person to start a Child Care Business "Chinsuh Childcare" in the Burmese Community*

**C. Thawng Lian Thang**

*as the first person to start a CPA Firm "Pacific CPA" in the Burmese Community*

*Celebration Committee | 30 Years of Burmese Community in Central Indiana*

# OUTSTANDING AWARDS

## MOST OUTSTANDING PERSON AWARDS

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring individuals from Central Indiana for their most outstanding leadership in each of the following fields of service or professions.*

### ***Most Influential Faith Leader Award***

*is presented to*

***Rev. Stephen Hre Kio, Ph.D.***

*for your outstanding leadership, service, and contributions to the Burmese Community*

### ***Most Outstanding Community Leader Award***

*is presented to*

***Elaisa Vahnje***

*for your outstanding leadership, service, and contributions to the Burmese Community as well as to peace and democracy in Myanmar (Burma)*

### ***Most Outstanding Community Youth Leader Award***

*is presented to*

***Justin Thang***

*for your outstanding leadership, service, and contributions to the Burmese Community*

### ***Most Accomplished Author***

*is presented to*

***Van Tuah Piang***

*for your outstanding publishing work and contributions to the Burmese Community*

### ***Most Outstanding Artist***

*is presented to*

***Emily Ngun Hlei Sung***

*for your outstanding service and contributions to the Burmese Community*

### ***Most Outstanding Artist***

*is presented to*

***AaTa Van***

*for your outstanding service and contributions to the Burmese Community*

### ***Most Outstanding Award***

***Textile Design and Cultural Preservation***

*is presented to*

***Anna Biak Tha Mawi***

*for your outstanding contributions to the Burmese Community*

### ***Most Outstanding Business***

*is presented to*

***Chinsuh Childcare***

*for your outstanding childcare business and contributions to the Burmese Community*



# EDUCATION AWARD

## DOCTORAL DEGREE

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring those from the Burmese community who earned Master's Degree and/or Above in Central Indiana for their educational achievement.*

*Rev. Maw San Aung, Doctoral*  
*Rev. Lal Cung Awi, Doctor of Ministry, Christian Theological Seminary*  
*Rev. Thlaawr Bawihrin, Doctoral*  
*Geneve Cung, Doctoral*  
*Rev. Hrang Hlei, Ph.D, Luther Seminary*  
*Rev. Ci Lian Kap, Doctor of Ministry in Preaching, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago*  
*Rev. Stephen Hre Kio, Ph.D, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia*  
*Rev. Zozum Kuihon, Ph.D in Biblical Studies, Immanuel Baptist Theological Seminary, GA*  
*Harmon Lian, Doctor of Jurisprudence, Indiana University H. McKinney School of Law*  
*Ngun Cung Lian, S.J.D., Indiana University, Bloomington*  
*Dr. Bawi Mang Lian, MBBS, University of Medicine 2, MPH, University of Public Health, Master of Science in Global Health Policy and Management and Master of Arts in Sustainable International Development, Brandeis University*

*Rev. Hre Mang, Ph.D in Leadership, Tennessee Temple University*  
*Rev. Val Thang Matu, Doctor of Theology, Carolina University of Theology*  
*Rev. Thawngling Mualhlun, Doctoral*  
*Dr. TetLu Myint, Doctoral, Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S), Indiana University School of Dentistry*  
*Tun Myint, Ph.D., Indiana University, Bloomington*  
*Dr. Irene Nunuk, MD, Michigan State University*  
*Ei Sandi Nwe, Ph.D. in Strategic Management, Purdue University*  
*Tial Par, Doctoral*  
*Lun Kham Pieper, Doctor of Jurisprudence, IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law*  
*Pastor Ro Lian Thang, Doctor of Ministry, Central Baptist Theological Seminary*  
*Ruby Sing (aka) Khin Myint Myint Thein, Ph.D., Indiana University, Indianapolis*  
*Dr. Tial Tinkai, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine*  
*Rev. E Zabik, Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary*

# EDUCATION AWARD

## MASTER'S DEGREE

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring those from the Burmese community who earned Master's Degree and/or Above in Central Indiana for their educational achievement.*

*Van Arakan, Master's Degree*  
*Vanlianpar Bualteng, Master of Science in Media Arts & Sciences, Indiana University*  
*Vanhnem Bualteng, Master of Arts in Curriculum & Educational Technology, Ball State University*  
*Nunmawi Bualteng, Master of Science in Nursing-Family Practice, Indiana Wesleyan University*  
*Za Bik Bualteng, Master's Degree*  
*Mai Sung Chin, MSN FNP OMS WCC, Indiana Wesleyan University*  
*Sung Chin, Master's Degree*  
*Biak Chinpar, Master of Public Health Epidemiology and Master of Health, Environmental Health, IUPUI*  
*(Apryl) Thint T. Cho, Master of Science, Indiana University*  
*Pastor Jay Cung, Master's Degree*  
*Ro Ding, Master of Arts in Political Science, Ball State University*  
*Steven Gay (aka) Gugu, Master of Arts in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence (COEX), Brandeis University*  
*Seng Hkum, Master of Public Affairs, Indiana University*

*David Hnanga, Master of Music, Master of Arts, Butler University, Taylor University*  
*Pastor Mary Iang, Master's Degree*  
*Albert Kap, Master's Degree*  
*Ngun Nei Kil, Master of Science in Biomedical Science*  
*Ye Win Latt, MBA in Human Resources, Indiana Wesleyan University*  
*Lal Levi, Master's Degree*  
*Paul Billy Lal Tlen Lian, Master of Arts (Children, Youth, and Family Ministry), Indiana Wesleyan University*  
*Honey Lian, Master's in International Communication*  
*Pastor David Lian, Master's Degree*  
*Jonathan Lian, Master's Degree in Applied Data Science, IUPUI*  
*Run Sui Lian, Master's Degree*  
*Rosy Liantu, Master of Science in Management, University of Indianapolis*  
*Dim Suan Man, Master of Science in School Counseling and Counselor Education, IUPUI*  
*Sarah Bawi Tin Cuai Mang, Master of Public Health, Chamberlain University*  
*Alice Mawi, Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages*

# EDUCATION AWARDS

## MASTER'S DEGREE

FROM THE BURMESE COMMUNITY

*Honoring those from the Burmese community who earned Master's Degree and/or Above in Central Indiana for their educational achievement.*

*Elly Biaktin Mawi, Master in Public Health Epidemiology*

*Shane Myint, Master of Science in Nursing, University of Indianapolis*

*Pastor David Ngoletha, Master's Degree*

*Van Cer Par, Master's Degree*

*Sui Hnem Par, MEd in Literacy, Culture and Language Education, Indiana University*

*Naw Sweet Peace, Master of Science in Environmental Science, Indiana University*

*Naw Phaw, Master's Degree*

*Cungro Phuting, Master's Degree*

*Lal Hlim Puii, Master of Theological Studies, McCormick Theological Seminary*

*Peter Biak Lian Sang, Master of Science in Information Systems, University of Maryland Baltimore County*

*Lian Sang, Master of Public Health, Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, IUPUI*

*Htayni Partha Sui, Master of Health Administration, Master of Public Health in Health Policy and Management, IUPUI*

*Biak Tha Hlawn Sung, Master in Social Work*

*Biak Ci Sung, Master's Degree*

*Suihlei Tha, Master in Social Work, University of Indianapolis*

*Jenni Thang, Master of Science in Education, Purdue University*

*Mercy Thang, Master's Degree*

*Hlalum Helen Thang Matu, Master of Social Work - Concentration in Mental Health, IUPUI*

*Patrick P. Thar, Master of Science in Nursing, Indiana University*

*Rev. David Thawma, Master's Degree*

*Pastor Van Bawi Thawng, Master's Degree*

*Van Bawi Tha Thawng, Master's Degree*

*Anna Sung Chin Tial, Master of Business Administration, American University*

*Minn Myint Nan Tin, Master of Public Administration, Indiana Wesleyan University*

*James Tluang, Master's Degree*

*Elaisa Vahnne, Master of Public Affairs (MPA) in Comparative International Affairs & Policy Analysis, Indiana University*

*Zing Hlei Vang, Master of Public Health, IUPUI*

*Za Hniang Za, Master of Science (Electrical Engineering), Florida Institute of Technology*

*Suitintial Zathang, Master of Science in Biology*

*Lyly Zothang, Master's Degree*

*Van Lal Sang Zuali, Master of Science in Nursing: MSN-FNP (primary care) Indiana Wesleyan University*

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS

### HONOREES

*Honoring non-Burmese individuals or organizations who have contributed significantly to the development of Burmese Community in Central Indiana in the past 30 years. The contributions and impact can be in many different forms and fields, e.g. education service provider, employer, health service provider, hospital, etc.*

#### OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)

#### INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF INDIANAPOLIS

**What the Nomination says:** The International Center of Indianapolis has played a crucial role in helping the Burmese community become visible to stakeholders in Central Indiana. They not only successfully advocated for the hiring of the first Burmese Teaching Aid at Perry Township School District, but the IC has helped many Burmese individuals and community organizations grow including BACI through partnership and support. They more than deserve to be recognized at this milestone of the Burmese Community in Central Indiana.

#### OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD (CITY GOVERNMENT)

#### CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

**What the Nomination says:** The City of Indianapolis has welcomed over 30,000 Burmese who now proudly call the city their new home. The City leadership has created and sustained a welcoming environment in which everyone is treated equally with respect and dignity and where newcomers like the Burmese can dream the American dream and achieve their fullest potentials. We are indeed proud and humbled to call Indianapolis our home and be part of the rapidly internationalizing city with diverse cultural vibrancy. We are deeply appreciative of the City of Indianapolis and all of its Mayors past and current Mayor for their leadership, partnership and support. To honor them as part of a celebration of the 30 Years of Burmese Community in Central Indiana is the least we could do. Thank you.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(LITERACY AND EDUCATION)

INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

**What the Nomination says:** The Indianapolis Public Library has provided exceptional libraries and educational services to the Burmese community in Central Indiana. Especially, the Southport and West Perry Branches have been great resources for the community.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDER)

FRANCISCAN HEALTH

**What the Nomination says:** Franciscan St. Francis Hospital arguably is the best destination for Burmese patients in Indianapolis. They have also helped Burmese families and organizations through a variety of collaborative initiatives. We proudly call and recognize St. Francis Hospital as an Outstanding Community Partner in the area of Health Services.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES)

EXODUS REFUGEE IMMIGRATION

**What the Nomination says:** Exodus Refugee Resettlement has played an essential role in welcoming and resettling thousands of Burmese refugees in Central Indiana. We recognize Exodus Refugee Immigration as an Outstanding Community Partner in the area of Refugee Resettlement.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES)

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

**What the Nomination says:** Catholic Charities has played an essential role in welcoming and resettling thousands of Burmese refugees in Central Indiana. We recognize Catholic Charities as an Outstanding Community Partner in the area of Refugee Resettlement.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES)

INDIANA STATE REFUGEE  
COORDINATOR

**What the Nomination says:** The Indiana State Refugee Coordinator has played an important and positive role in allowing thousands of Burmese refugees to resettle in the State successfully. We gladly recognize the State Refugee Coordinator as an Outstanding Community Partner in the area of Refugee Resettlement and Integration.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(PUBLIC HEALTH)

MARION COUNTY HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT

**What the Nomination says:** Marion County Health Department not only provides to thousands of Burmese refugees their initial health screening needs upon their arrivals, but also provides public health services to the Burmese community through the community collaborative initiatives. We gladly recognize Marion County Health Department as an Outstanding Community Partner in the area of Public Health.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(COMMUNITY SERVICE AND EDUCATION)

UNIVERSITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

**What the Nomination says:** The University of Indianapolis has played crucial role in the development of the Burmese Community in Indianapolis through its various collaborative partnerships to many organizations including with BACI through Service-Learning, volunteerism, cultural engagement, space sharing, admissions and scholarships, special research projects, and more. We recognize UIndy as an Outstanding Community Partner in the areas of Higher Education & Community Service Partnership.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(K-12 EDUCATION)

PERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

**What the Nomination says:** Perry Township Schools currently enroll over 4400 Burmese students and have played an outstanding role in educating thousands of Burmese students in the past 30 years. PTS and its leadership have not only created a welcoming environment for all, but also offered the best possible learning opportunities for ELL students, such as students from Burma, and have brought together diverse resources to accommodate the educational needs of the rapidly growing Burmese population in the district as well as embracing and fostering a collaborative partnership. We gladly recognize PTS as the most outstanding community partner in K-12 education for our Burmese community in Indianapolis.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(COLLEGIATE EDUCATION)

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE  
UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS

**What the Nomination says:** IUPUI - Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis probably enrolls the highest number of Burmese students from Central Indiana every year. In addition to the high percentage of Burmese students going to IUPUI, the campus has served our community in many different ways. Included are IU Health services provided to the community, faculty members conducting research on Burmese communities in effort to help improve the community as a whole, cultural events hosted by IUPUI, and many more. We gladly recognize IUPUI as an Outstanding Community Partner in the area of the highest number Burmese college students enrolled and other Higher Education related engagement with the Burmese community in Indianapolis.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(SCHOLARSHIP, TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP)

INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
BLOOMINGTON

**What the Nomination says:** Indiana University Bloomington has now admitted over 100 Burmese students from the Indianapolis area, some with full-tuition scholarships. That is millions of dollars in scholarships. In addition to the scholarships awarded to Burmese students, various academic units and centers, faculty members, staff and students at IUB have engaged with and contributed to the development of the Burmese Community in Central Indiana, and to the peace, democracy and development of Burma. With such rich history and strong partnership, their support to the Burmese is unparalleled. We gladly recognize IUB as an Outstanding Community Partner in the areas of providing scholarships, training and leadership.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(LOCAL GOVERNMENT)

**PERRY TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES**

**What the Nomination says:** The Perry Township Trustees have been an outstanding Community Partner in local government, particularly in the area of facility, emergency, need assistance and more.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(PUBLIC SAFETY)

**INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN  
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**What the Nomination says:** IMPD has been providing critical important public safety services to the community including to members and families of the Burmese community in central indiana. We gladly recognize the IMPD as an Outstanding Community Partner in Public Safety.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(FINANCIAL SERVICES)

**PNC BANK**

**What the Nomination says:** PNC Bank has a strong commitment to serving diverse communities, including the Burmese American community. As a financial institution it has significantly contributed to the development of the Burmese-American community. We gladly recognize PNC bank as an Outstanding Financial Services Community Partner.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD  
(CLINICAL CARE SERVICE)

**WINDROSE HEALTH NETWORK**

**What the Nomination says:** Windrose Health Network has provided our community outstanding culturally and linguistically sensitive clinical care services. We therefore gladly recognize Windrose Health Network as an Outstanding Community Partner.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD

**BRUCE RAY, PH.D.**

**Bruce Ray, Ph.D.**  
*Retired Scientist*

A retired scientist and Board member of BACI, a dedicated advocate for the advancement of the Burmese-American community. Dr. Ray has tutored over thirty students from Burma in Indianapolis. We gladly recognize Dr. Ray as our Outstanding Community Partner who has provided distinguished services to our community.

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY  
PARTNER AWARD

**BONNIE KANE**

**Bonnie Kane**  
*Retired Teacher*

Burmese-American advocate for over a decade, Board member of BACI and winner of the Golden Hoosier Award, the highest honor bestowed on a senior in Indiana by the Lt. Governor. Bonnie has provided distinguished services to our community we, therefore, gladly recognize her as our Outstanding Community Partner.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS

### HONOREES



**RICHARD LUGAR (dec.)**

**Richard Lugar**  
*U.S. Senator*

for his outstanding partnership, distinguished service, and contributions to the Burmese Community as well as to peace and democracy in Myanmar (Burma)

#### **Biography**

Richard G. Lugar, former U.S. Senator, served as the inaugural President of The Lugar Center, a nonprofit focused on global food security, WMD nonproliferation, aid effectiveness, and bipartisan governance. He also held key academic roles at Indiana University and founded the Richard G. Lugar Symposium for Tomorrow's Leaders at the University of Indianapolis. During his Senate tenure, Lugar led on food security, nuclear non-proliferation, energy independence, and free trade. His accomplishments earned him 46 honorary degrees and recognition as an Outstanding Legislator by the American Political Science Association. International honors included a knighthood from the Queen of England and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama.



**TODD YOUNG**

**Todd Young**  
*U.S. Senator*

for your outstanding partnership, distinguished service, and contributions to the Burmese Community as well as to peace and democracy in Myanmar (Burma)

#### **Biography**

Senator Todd Young is a dedicated public servant representing Indiana. He serves on various U.S. Senate committees, including Finance, Foreign Relations, Commerce, Science & Transportation, and Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Prior to his Senate tenure, he held roles on the House Armed Services Committee, House Budget Committee, and House Ways and Means Committee.

After graduating from high school, Senator Young joined the U.S. Navy and earned an appointment to the United States Naval Academy. He graduated with honors in 1995, served in the U.S. Marine Corps, and pursued an MBA with an economics focus at the University of Chicago. Following his military service, he gained experience at The Heritage Foundation, worked as a legislative assistant in the U.S. Senate, and earned a law degree from Indiana University in 2005.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS

### HONOREES



**JACK SANDLIN (dec.)**

**Jack Sandlin**  
*Indiana State Senator*  
for your outstanding partnership,  
distinguished service, and contributions to  
the Burmese Community

#### **Biography**

Jack Sandlin, a Vietnam War veteran, began his career as an IPD officer in 1973, eventually rising to Deputy Chief of Investigations and serving as a Marion County Grand Jury investigator before retiring in 1996. Later, he was elected Perry Township Trustee, a city-county councilor, and state senator for District 36, specializing in law enforcement, criminal justice, homelessness, mental health, and improving Indiana's gun permit system. Sandlin earned the Distinguished Hoosier Award in 1993 and was a certified fraud examiner. He founded Jack Sandlin & Associates Fraud Examination and leaves behind his wife, Lydia, a daughter, and three grandchildren.



**ANDRÉ D. CARSON**

**André D. Carson**  
*U.S. Congressman*  
for your outstanding partnership, distinguished  
service, and contributions to the Burmese  
Community as well as to peace and democracy in  
Myanmar (Burma)

#### **Biography**

Congressman André Carson has represented Indiana's 7th Congressional District since 2008, focusing on economic growth, national security, and the middle class. As the top Democrat on the Emerging Threats Subcommittee of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, he plays a crucial role in enhancing U.S. security efforts. Carson's prior experience with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security informs his work. He also contributes to transportation and infrastructure development. In House leadership, he serves as a Senior Whip, a Steering and Policy Committee member, and a Congressional Black Caucus Executive Leadership Team member. As one of two Muslims in Congress, Carson champions equal protection under the law, advocating for gender fairness, religious freedom, and marriage equality. Raised in Indianapolis, he learned the values of hard work, public service, and compassion from his family.

# GLOBAL LEADERS AWARD



**ELAISA VAHNIE**

## Honoring and Appreciating Recipient of Indiana's 50 Global Leaders Award

Elaisa Vahnjie has over two decades of active engagement and experience working on issues related to Myanmar (also known as Burma), and has led and formed various successful collaborative and strategic partnerships nationally and internationally. He has been actively involved in the Burmese struggles for democracy and in refugee protection since 1996, when he fled his native country to escape arrest for having participated in the pro-democracy movement.

Mr. Vahnjie is currently the Executive Director of the Burmese American Community Institute (BACI), which he co-founded in 2011.

Mr. Vahnjie came to the United States as a recipient of a scholarship funded by the U.S. Department of State. He has worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Malaysia, and successfully advocated for the smooth processing of Burmese refugees' third country resettlement, including to the USA.

Mr. Vahnjie continues to engage and contribute to change in Burma through international advocacy, direct service delivery, and consultancy services including regularly giving briefings to various bureaus at the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Congressional Offices, and international institutions regarding trends of key issues facing Myanmar and the region.

As part of an effort to support democracy and peace in Myanmar, Mr. Vahnjie has spearheaded the unprecedented annual Spring Flowers International Conference on Myanmar for the past three years designed to support peace and democracy in the country. Over 100 high profile speakers have attended this online conference. He also organized the U.S.-Myanmar Engagement Conference in Indianapolis in 2015 where Nobel Laureate & State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a video keynote address.

As a foreign policy advocate and a community organizer, Mr. Vahnjie has been recognized with numerous awards for his dedication and service, including the most recent honor, being named one of Indiana's 50 Global Leaders in the past 50 years by the International Center for his leadership and contributions to elevating the State of Indiana on the global stage.

Mr. Vahnjie holds a Master's of Public Affairs (MPA) degree from Indiana University Bloomington, where he specialized in Comparative International Affairs and Policy Analysis.

STATE OF INDIANA  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
INDIANAPOLIS

PROCLAMATION

Executive Order

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME, GREETINGS:

- WHEREAS, over 40,000 Burmese Hoosiers currently call Indiana home. Some of the first Burmese individuals were resettled in Central Indiana in July 1993 and this year marks 30 years of the Burmese (Myanmar) community in Central Indiana; and
- WHEREAS, with the leadership provided by the Burmese American Community institute, Burmese Americans have joined the state in helping make Indiana the best place to live work, study and stay; and
- WHEREAS, the Burmese in Indiana have annually hosted historically important events such as the International Conference on Myanmar and Myanmar Union Day – a commemoration of the Panglong Agreement reached on February 12, 1947 which allowed the formation of the Union of Burma as we know it today and the co-existence of diverse Burmese ethnic groups to co-exist in a country; and
- WHEREAS, the observation of Myanmar Union Day in Indiana celebrates cultural diversity and historical heritage, thereby promoting a greater mutual understanding among receiving and incoming communities towards a successful and sustainable integration; and
- WHEREAS, the growing Burmese population has been actively participating in our state's economy, high educational performance, and vibrant cultural diversity thereby continues to enrich the Hoosiers communities across the state and making Indiana a better place for all;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Eric J. Holcomb, Governor of the State of Indiana, do hereby proclaim the month of July, 2023 as

BURMESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY MONTH

in the State of Indiana, and invite all citizens to duly note this occasion.

*In Testimony Whereof, I hereto  
set my hand and cause to be affixed the  
Great Seal of State. Done at the  
City of Indianapolis, this 8th  
day of June the year of our  
Lord 2023 and of the Independence  
of the United States 247.*



BY THE GOVERNOR:

*Eric J. Holcomb*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## ORGANIZER

### BURMESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY INSTITUTE

We would like to thank members of the Celebration Committee who have participated and contributed to the success of this event through an inclusive and open process with Burmese American Community Institute (BACI) serving as the initiator of this historic event.

BACI is a non-profit organization founded in 2011 that provides educational and vocational support to the Burmese community in greater Indianapolis. BACI supports community members regionally, nationally, and globally through strategic partnerships and advocacy. Since its inception, BACI has assisted over 20,000+ individuals.

BACI has been recognized with numerous honors for its service and collaborative leadership including Partner of the Year Awards by educational institutions and other entities, and most recently with the Stone of Hope by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission.

**30,000**

Burmese in  
Central  
Indiana

**20,000**

Persons  
assisted in  
12 years

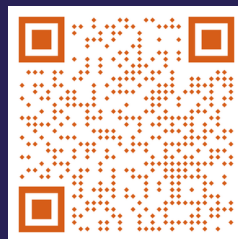
**70,000**

Volunteer  
Hours

**93%**

Burmese  
college-going  
rate 2022

### Support our work



BACI Campus | 5212 & 5246 Bluff Rd, Indianapolis, IN 46217 | [info@thebaci.org](mailto:info@thebaci.org) | [www.thebaci.org](http://www.thebaci.org)

*Celebration Committee | 30 Years of Burmese Community in Central Indiana*