

Event Title: *An Appreciation of Asian Americans Through Storytelling*

Event Description:

In honor of Asian American Awareness Month, a diverse panel of storytellers will share stories exploring both the challenges and blessings of being Asian American. Storytelling will be followed by facilitated discussion among the audience and our storytellers. We will explore both the current and historic roots of anti-Asian sentiment and how we can improve our human relations and create greater equity for us all.

When: Tuesday, May 24, 2022, @7pm to 9pm Pacific Time

Where: TBD – maybe in the Veterans Building

Confirmed Storytellers:

1. Jomeline D. Balatayo, Ph.D.

Philippina American, 1st generation.

ELD and English Teacher, ELD Instructional Coordinator at Culver City High School

2. Tasneem Noor – proposed dialogue facilitator (She is Samia's sister)

Indian/Pakistani American, 1st generation.

Author, Speaker, Interfaith Facilitator.

Culver City Resident.

3. Past Mayor Thomas Small

4. Aileen Poehls

Chinese American, 2nd generation.

Organizer of the Culver City English Country Dance at Stone House.

5. Rolla Selbak

Arab/Asian American, 1st generation.

Filmmaker

Marketing plan: announcements at other CBD's, city council meeting, street banners, email to our friends and family, social media,

-- hard copy fliers can also be made available – work with staff to create the design...

- * Maybe have music...
- * Put up A.A. art/decorations around the room
- * Have people at the door welcoming attendees...
- * Would we have enough budget for refreshments? Would refreshments be allowed given covid?
- * Street banners cost -- \$1548/banner, \$4500 or so for 3 banners...

Agenda Outline:

- * Welcome (10 mins)
 - pledge of allegiance
 - Roll call for committee members...
 - Share the agenda for the day....
- * The panel of keynote storytellers will share their stories (25-30 mins)
- * Keynote storytellers react/reflect on each other's stories to model deep listening & reflection for the audience (20 mins)
- * Q&A and facilitated discussion on the stories with the audience (25 mins)
- * Concluding remarks (5 mins)

Note: we can add an art display table at the back of the room for people to enjoy

Storyteller Bio's & Pics

Dr. Jomeline Balatayo is a first-generation immigrant from Manila, Philippines. Her immigrant roots and childhood experiences catalyzed her zeal for lifelong learning. As such, she earned a Ph.D. in Education from UC Santa Barbara, where she specialized in Language, Literacy, and Composition Studies. Jomeline's various teaching experiences at the K-12 and university levels reflect her passion for addressing the diverse needs of multilingual learners. Currently, she serves as an English teacher and English Language Development (ELD) Instructional Coordinator at Culver City High School. She is also a member of the Committee on Accreditation for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Apart from her professional roles, Jomeline is most proud of her job of helping raise her 3-year old son Grayson, who is learning to

become bilingual in English and Tagalog.



Tasneem Noor is the award-winning author of *The Faith Connection: Your Journey Starts with Knowing Yourself*; and the founder of Noor Enterprises: SOULful Transformations. As the Programs Director for NewGround: A Muslim Jewish Partnership for Change Tasneem has trained over 200 community leaders through 8 month long conflict transformational programs for healthy relations, productive engagement and social change. Tasneem uses compassion and curiosity to resolve conflict and make difficult conversations easy. Authenticity and honesty are her most cherished values in building stronger relationships and sustainable community. Tasneem is an Interfaith-Minister-in-Residence with the Episcopal Diocese.



Past Mayor Thomas Small

Bio available at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aujero_Small#:~:text=Thomas%20Aujero%20Small%20\(born%20April,City%20from%202018%20to%202019.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aujero_Small#:~:text=Thomas%20Aujero%20Small%20(born%20April,City%20from%202018%20to%202019.)



Aileen Poehls

Bio for Aileen Poehls

My parents came to the US in the 1930's for graduate study at the University of Chicago and University of Illinois-Circle Campus from Beijing and Shanghai and were political refugees when the communists took control of the country. I was born in Chicago. As a heavy-mineral geologist, my father's jobs took him around the country, mostly to small towns. So, California is the 10th state that I've lived in – I tell people that my family was not in the military – there are rocks everywhere! And often we were the only Asian family in the community.

My husband's family came from the SFV and when Ken obtained a post-doctoral position at UCLA and we moved back to the LA area in 1975, he was adamant about living on the westside. We bought our house in 1978, before we had our daughter Diane. With only one child, I worked part-time for a many years. I was her Girl Scout (Troop 4) leader and helped plan Culver City Girl Scout Neighborhood Events: Fall Recruitment, Winter Camp, and spring Leader Recognitions. I served as the Farragut Site Council President and was active in the PTA. I was also Y-Indian Maid Program Tehama at Culver-Palms YMCA while involved with that program. As a member of the Baha'i Faith, I serve as the secretary for the Culver City Baha'i Local Spiritual Assembly and have taught Baha'i Children's Classes at the Los Angeles Baha'i Center, in Santa Monica, and in Culver City over the years and was serving as an animator for Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program (Middle School) until the pandemic shut us down.

I am currently a tutor for the Ruhi Institute facilitating weekly study circles and also at week-long camps. As an Adult Educator for Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles, I have been involved in training leaders for all program levels and camping skills and helped consolidate policies of six councils formed Greater Los Angeles for Adult Recognitions and Camping.

As the organizer of the Culver City English Country Dance at Stone House, I help coordinate facilities, musicians, and callers for our twice-monthly dances in addition to serving as registrar for our annual Playford-to-the-Present Ball in the fall. I'm currently enjoying Qi Gong and Tai Chi in our parks and help organize the Unity in Diversity picnics being held to help acquaint us with our neighbors.

Professionally, after studying Mathematics at a Liberal Arts College in the MidWest, I worked at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution as a Research Assistant, then was one of the original employees of Arete Associates, a small Defense Contractor, starting as a scientific programmer/analyst moving on to a Project, then Program Manager and ending my 43 year stint in Systems Security as I watched the company grow from 12 to over 300 in 10 offices across the country. Arete means Excellence in All Things in Greek.

Becoming a member of the Baha'i Faith helped me put into context my parents' religions as well as my scientific mindset since the Baha'i Writings explain that all religions are from the same God, brought by Messengers (Prophets, Manifestations) to mankind at different times and places according to our need. Among the other Baha'i principles are the harmony of science and religion, the need for universal education, the equality of women and men, the elimination of all prejudices, the eventual establishment of an auxiliary language for everyone and Most Great Peace. With no clergy, humanity is ready for determining for itself the truths it believes in. This also gives me a community in which I can belong regardless of my height, features, and differences.



Rolla Selbak Bio:

"Rolla Selbak is a Sundance alumna, and a writer/director of film and TV. She's a triple- minority in the film industry: a queer, Arab American woman, and is known for bringing strong female characters to the forefront of her work. She imprints her fresh point of view as a daughter of Palestinian parents, and immigrating from Abu Dhabi to the U.S after the first Gulf War while she was in high school.

Her most recent credits include *CHOKES*, a film about a rising MMA fighter who hides her Syrian refugee status from her small American town, and helping the internationally acclaimed feature film *THREE VEILS*, a first of its kind to confront homosexuality within the Muslim-American subculture.

Selbak's latest TV project, *YA BINT*, a dramedy TV series she co-created with *Jack Ryan*'s Dina Shihabi, was in development at 20th Century Fox last year

She has previously served on the board of directors at *OUTFEST*."

