

Hmong American Socioeconomic Profile

By Mark E. Pfeifer, Ph.D.

Summary of 2005 ACS Population Profile for Hmong Americans

(Hmong Alone or in Any Combination)

- Estimated Hmong Population: 188,900
Percent Male: 49.1
Percent Female: 50.9
- Percent Divorce Rate: 3.3
(Compared to 10.2% of all Americans over age 15)
- Median Age: 18.3
(Compared to 36.4 among all Americans)
- Percent Employed in Manufacturing: 32.7
(Compared to 11.9% of all Employed Americans over 16)
- Median Family Income: \$38,335
(Compared to \$55,832 U.S.)
- Poverty Rate: 32.7
(Compared to 10.2% among all U.S. Families)
- Homeownership Rate: 50.9
(Compared to 67% among all U.S. Households)

The U.S. Census Bureau released nationwide Hmong data from the 2005 American Community Survey (ACS) in late 2006. It must be noted that the 2005 American Community Survey data set involves estimates based on surveys distributed to only a subset of the U.S. population and is thus problematic in some respects. The figures very likely represent a significant undercount of the U.S. Hmong population. It is also important to observe that the 2005 ACS figures do not include many of the more than 15,000 Hmong refugees who were resettled in the United States over the 2004-2006 period.

The 2005 American Community Survey profile for Hmong-Americans is interesting and useful however as it represents the first detailed "official" demographic profile of Hmong in the United States since the release of the 2000 U.S. census enumerations. This article provides a short summary of some of the key data points that emerge from the 2005 American Community Survey of Hmong across the United States. The data included in this article are from the 2005 ACS profile of the "Hmong alone or in any combination" population in the United States.

The 2005 American Community Survey estimated there were 188,900 persons in the U.S. who reported that they were solely Hmong or a combination of Hmong and some other ethnic group(s). This figure is up somewhat from the 186,000 Hmong reported in the 2000 U.S. Census. The 2005 ACS estimated that the U.S. Hmong population was 49.1% Male and 50.9% Female. The estimated Median Age of the Hmong

population across the United States in the 2005 data was 18.3 years old compared to 36.4 for the overall population of the United States showing the continuing youthful distribution of the Hmong-American community, a key trend that also emerged in the 2000 census data when the U.S. Hmong population was estimated to have a median age of about 16 years. The 2005 ACS estimated that 3.3% of Hmong-Americans aged 15 and over had been divorced compared to 10.2% of all Americans.

Looking at educational attainment, the 2005 ACS estimated that 7.5% of Hmong Americans had earned a Bachelor's degree compared to 17.2% of the American population as a whole and that 2.2% of Hmong in the U.S. had earned a graduate degree in contrast to about 10% of all Americans. These figures are very similar to those found in the 2000 census but reflect considerable increases in Hmong-American educational attainment over 1990 figures. While Hmong-Americans in younger cohorts were less likely to have a disability in comparison to the overall U.S. population, the 2005 ACS estimated that 55.8% of Hmong-Americans aged 65 years and older had a disability compared to 40.5% of older Americans in this cohort. The 2005 ACS data estimated that about half of Hmong in the U.S. are American citizens. In terms of year of entry in the U.S., the 2005 ACS profile estimates that 56.2% of Hmong entered the U.S. before 1990, 31.4% between 1990 and 1999 and 12.5% after the year 2000. According to the 2005 ACS data, an estimated 47.7% of Hmong in the U.S. reported speaking English less than very well, a somewhat lower figure than in 2000.

In terms of industrial distribution, the 2005 ACS estimated that 32.7% of employed Hmong over 16 worked in manufacturing compared to 11.9% of all employed Americans, the next highest Hmong distributions were in Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance, 17.8% compared to 20.7% of all employed Americans, and 11.5% in Retail Trade compared to 11.6% of all employed Americans in this category. The Median Hmong Family income in the 2005 ACS was \$38,335, up from \$32,076 in 1999 census data (the U.S. Median Family income in the 2005 ACS was \$55,832). The U.S. Hmong poverty rate in the 2005 ACS data profile was 32.7% down from 38% enumerated in 1999 census data, the overall U.S. poverty rate in the 2005 ACS was 10.2%. According to the 2005 ACS estimates, the Hmong homeownership rate was up significantly compared to 2000. In the 2005 ACS figures, 50.9% of Hmong households owned their homes while 49.1% lived in renter-occupied units. The Hmong homeownership rate in 2000 census data was about 38%. In the 2005 ACS data, about 67% of all U.S. households lived in owner-occupied units.

Mark E. Pfeifer, PhD is an Academic Librarian at Texas A and M University in Corpus Christi. He is also editor of the peer-reviewed scholarly publication, the Hmong Studies Journal, and the Hmong Studies Internet Resource Center (www.hmongstudies.org) as well as the Vietnamese Studies Internet Resource Center (www.vstudies.org) website. More census data may be viewed at www.hmongstudies.org. Mark may be reached at mark.pfeifer@tamucc.edu. ■

APAICS receives grant in honor of Norman Mineta

The Coca-Cola Foundation (CCF) has generously donated a check for \$60,000 to support the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies Fellowships to be named in honor of former Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta. This grant will specifically fund two fellowship stipends of \$30,000 each for two Asian or Pacific Islander recent college graduates to participate in the 2007 program, said Ingrid Saunders Jones, Chairperson of The Coca-Cola Foundation.

Former Secretary Mineta was recently honored in December by President George W. Bush with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his service to the United States. The Presidential Medal of Freedom is America's highest civil award. Mineta also served in the Clinton Administration as Secretary of Commerce, U.S. Congressman from the State of California (1975-95), and Mayor of San Jose (1971-74).

Upon learning of the Fellowships, Mineta stated, "I am deeply indebted to The Coca-Cola Foundation for their generosity in funding these Fellowships to allow young Asian Pacific Islander Americans to follow their dreams in public service."

Mineta co-founded the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and served as its first chair. He was also instrumental in establishing The Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)



Norman Y. Mineta

and has recently rejoined the APAICS Board as Vice Chair.

Incoming APAICS Chairman David L. Kim indicated that APAICS has gained great momentum with Secretary Mineta's return. "He is a great friend to the Asian Pacific Islander community and we are extremely pleased to have him honored in this way," he said.

Including the Mineta Fellows, other APAICS Fellowships may be found on APAICS Web site. They include the George Aratani Foundation/Daniel K. Inouye Fellowship, Anheuser-Busch/Frank Horton Fellowship, and the SODEXHO Health Fellow. Applications to apply for the Fellows program are online at www.apaics.org.

Founded in 1994, APAICS is a national 501 (c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan educational organization based in Washington, D.C. It aims to build a politically empowered Asian Pacific American community by filling the political pipeline for APAs to enter and advance into elected office, and to be a resource to Congress on the APA community. ■

Cambodian-motif for Chicago holiday tree



CHICAGO—Cook County, Illinois, Treasurer Maria Pappas and Cambodian guests young and adult stand in front of a Christmas tree decorated to reflect the culture of Cambodia. More than 90 trees and other holiday displays decorated by different ethnic groups were shown in Pappas' downtown Chicago office in "Holiday Trees From

Around the World," an exhibit that recognized the diverse cultures of Cook County. From left: Tola Chhuon; Kathy Reun, of the Cambodian Association of Illinois; Andy Khour; Kelly Khour; Jenny Pam; Treasurer Pappas; and Pat Michalski, assistant to Pappas on ethnic affairs. ■

AALDEF brings discrimination suit against restaurant

NEW YORK — Seven workers from the upscale Manhattan restaurant Daniel have filed a lawsuit in Manhattan federal court alleging intentional employment discrimination and harassment on the basis of their race, color, ethnicity, alienage, and national origin, and violations of their rights under federal and state laws governing fair wages.

The Latino and Bangladeshi plaintiffs, who are members of the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY), are

represented by the Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund (AALDEF) and Main Street Legal Services of the CUNY School of Law. The restaurant is owned by head chef Daniel Boulud and The Dinex Group.

According to the federal suit filed yesterday, Daniel has consistently denied the plaintiffs promotions to higher-paying positions of Captain, Assistant Captain, and Lounge Server while promoting white workers with the same or lesser skills, experience or seniority.

"Daniel's promotion practices reveal a two-track system whereby managers give white workers greater opportunities to move quickly to higher-paying, higher-status positions while denying those opportunities to Latino and Bangladeshi workers, who remain in the lower-paying and more physically demanding Busser and Runner positions," according to the complaint.

The suit also alleges that Boulud and his restaurant managers subjected the plaintiffs

to a hostile work environment and disparate treatment by disciplining them more harshly than white workers. Additionally, restaurant management made insulting comments about Latino and Bangladeshi employees' race and ethnicity and singled them out for verbal abuse.

Daniel restaurant also allegedly failed to pay two of the plaintiffs, a busser and a prep cook, federal and state minimum wage and overtime pay, despite working more than 40 hours a week. ■

Funds needed typhoon victims in Philippines

NEW YORK (January 24, 2007) — Only 7 per cent of the total funds needed to allow millions to recover from destructive typhoons that have struck the Philippines since last September have been received, the United Nations and its partners announced today.

The UN and its partners appealed for \$46 million in December after four successive typhoons left over 1,400 people dead or missing in their wake and affected more than 7 million. Thus far, apart from Canada and the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), very few donors have made substantial contributions.

"Funds are needed immediately to implement urgently needed assistance and to kickstart crucial recovery measures," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a press release.

Of the millions affected, the most vulnerable include a half million people in the Bicol region alone who need emergency shelter kits so that they can leave crowded evacuation centres. Those whose lives have been disrupted will require food aid as well as clean water, sanitation facilities and strengthened health systems to ward off potential disease outbreaks.

"Hundreds of thousands of people in the Bicol region and others devastated by the typhoons will receive assistance more quickly

and be able to start rebuilding their lives if the humanitarian community receives the necessary funding to provide emergency aid," said Nileema Noble, UN Resident Coordinator in the Philippines.

The World Food Programme (WFP), in conjunction with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Care, the Philippines National Red Cross and Plan, is distributing food aid to almost 100,000 in three provinces, and plan to bolster assistance over the coming months.

Although diseases such as diarrhoea spread by crowded conditions and poor hygiene facilities have been kept under control, there is still a need to strengthen the disease surveillance system, as well as rehabilitate damaged hospitals and clinics. The UN World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the NGO Medics Sans Frontieres and the health ministries of Indonesia and Malaysia, among other organizations, have provided the Philippines Department of Health with much-needed emergency health kits, medical supplies, maternal health kits and roving health care teams.

UNICEF is also joining with the NGO Oxfam and other partners to secure clean water supplies and safe sanitation, especially for people living in overcrowded evacuation centres. ■

UN political mission in Nepal

NEW YORK (January 23, 2007) — The Security Council today established a United Nations political mission in Nepal to oversee the peace process in the tiny Himalayan country, following an historic agreement reached last November by the Maoists and Government aimed at ending 10 years of bloody civil war that killed around 15,000 people and displaced over 100,000 others.

By a unanimously adopted resolution, the Council decided that the UN political mission in Nepal (UNMIN), to be headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, will have 12-month mandate which could be terminated or extended depending on a request from the Government.

The Council also took note of the Secretary-General's expectation that the operation "will be a focused mission of limited duration."

The resolution outlined main tasks for the mission, which will manage arms and armed personnel from both the Government and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), in line with the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement,

and support this year's planned elections.

As part of its work, the UNMIN will "provide technical support for the planning, preparation and conduct of the election of a Constituent Assembly in a free and fair atmosphere, in consultation with the parties" and "provide a small team of electoral monitors to review all technical aspects of the electoral process, and report on the conduct of the election."

The Council noted that both sides had asked for UN assistance in implementing key aspects of the peace deal, and also recognized the "strong desire of the Nepalese people for peace and the restoration of democracy." The 15-member body further highlighted the need to pay "special attention" to the needs of women, children and traditionally marginalized groups in the peace process.

An advance team of 35 UN monitors is already in Nepal and has begun registering and storing weapons of the former combatants. ■

ORGANIC

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- Prepare your meals yourself. "The movement in the last 100 years has been to get out of the kitchen, yet kitchens are getting bigger," says Ratté. "We are able to grab more 'convenience food' that is much less healthy. Plan ahead and take a Sunday and make some meals that can last a week";
- Shop at farmers' markets or purchase food through a community-supported farm or coop. "If you buy directly from the farmer, you can ask the farmer directly about how the food was grown," says Ratté;
- Be selective. "If you can't go totally organic, focus on meat. There is no room for negotiation on chicken, beef and eggs," says Ratté. "Frankly, the chicken in the grocery store scares me. The amount of hormones and antibiotics is frightening." Ratté adds that people should purchase organic versions of the produce

that is treated with the most chemicals, including strawberries, spinach, bell peppers, cherries, peaches, celery, apples, winter squash, potatoes, apricots, pears, Mexican cantaloupe, Chilean grapes, and green beans; and

- Read the label carefully. Only food labeled "organic" is certified by the USDA. "Other misleading terms are often used," says Ratté, adding that some of the most-used misleading terms include natural, cage-free, range-fed, and grass-fed.

"The food industry is all about selling food, not about selling health," says Ratté. "I know that going completely organic can seem overwhelming, but you can do this slowly. Start on certain things - like meat and eggs - and go from there."

For additional resources on organic living, visit www.nwhealth.edu/nns, a Web site focusing on natural approaches to health and wellness hosted by Northwestern Health Sciences University. ■