



CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA ANNOUNCES HIMALAYAN YOUTH VIDEO PROJECT

Partnership with Sahayeta to Lend New Voice to Underrepresented Asian Americans

San Francisco, CA – August 16, 2011 – The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from Asian Pacific Fund to produce *Himalayan Youth Voices*, a collection of short videos by and about Himalayan-American youth (including Tibetans, Bhutanese and Nepalese). The videos will premiere at CAAM's San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival (SFIAAFF) in March 2012 and made available on CAAMedia.org.

CAAM is partnering with Sahayeta, a Bay Area Nepali Alliance, to engage youth at the first annual Himalayan Youth Leadership Summit on August 20, 2011 at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland, California. CAAM will work with the youth to develop their own video pieces that address the simple question, "What does it mean to be Nepali, Nepali-American, Tibetan, Tibetan-American, or Bhutanese, Bhutanese-American?"

"This question is meant to serve as a starting point to encourage the youth to use video as a form of self-expression. Following an initial video workshop, CAAM hopes to work with young filmmakers to further explore what they feel to be pressing issues. Some possible topics could be cultural preservation, inter-generational concerns, community and political participation just to name a few," says Sapana Sakya, Public Media Director, CAAM.

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, Sahayeta is a non-profit organization that provides free primary health care for individuals in the Himalayan community who do not have health insurance.

"We at Sahayeta have been interested in expanding our work to provide support and guidance to youth in the community. We are thrilled about this important partnership with CAAM," says Nisha Thapa, Co-founder and President, Sahayeta. <http://www.sahayeta.org>

CAAM has long been a leader in producing documentaries that illuminate the Asian immigrant youth experience through films like the Emmy Award-winning AKA DON BONUS and SENTENCED HOME to name a few. CAAM has partnered with vibrant youth media programs such as the Vietnamese Youth Development Center, the East Bay Asian Youth Center, Scribe, and more.

"The Himalayan Youth Voices video project will be instrumental in telling the story of this underrepresented community. Told through the eyes of its youth, we are confident that the videos will spur further dialogue among youth, educators and community groups about the needs of this important voice within the Asian American community. This project is made possible through support from the Asian Pacific Fund, for which we are grateful," says Debbie Ng, Director of Development and Communications, CAAM.

CAAM was founded in 1980 by filmmakers, media activists and educators to address the scarcity of images of Asians and Asian Americans in film and television, challenge often distorted portrayals of them in the

mainstream media, and create opportunities for the full participation of Asian American producers in public media. For 30 years now, CAAM has exposed audiences to new voices and new communities, advancing a collective understanding of the American experience through a multiplicity of programming specifically designed to engage the Asian American community and the public at large.

Annually, CAAM's national public television broadcasts reach over 10 million viewers, SFIAAFF attracts over 25,000 audience members, and the educational distribution program serves over 2,000 universities, K-12 schools and libraries around the country. In addition, CAAM has awarded over \$4.5 million towards independent film and video productions by and about Asian Americans for public television broadcast with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Some of CAAM's ground-breaking productions include FIRST PERSON PLURAL (Korean), BOLINAO 52 (Vietnamese), A DREAM IN DOUBT (Sikh, South Asian) and THE LEARNING (Filipino). In recent years, CAAM has ventured into new media to expand impact, including mobile applications, gaming, and social media.

Today, CAAM is the leading Asian American media arts organization in the nation and a leading arts and culture organization in San Francisco.

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