

**Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly
2006 Community Treasures**

Olga Bashkina

Kanta Khipple

Roel Georgis

Mensura Periz

Kandien Khoun

Shu Ying Wu-Chen

Florian Bukiu

Zitta Rit

Lina Soroka

Atsuko Tamura

Won Lee

Oune Siharath

Shashi Singh

Duru Jeswani

Sister Rosalita Wojtykunas

Georgina Campos

Wai Chu Ku

Jeanette Youel



CLESE

2006 Annual Meeting
Honors

- All these Treasures left their home countries to pursue the American Dream
- All these people courageously faced the challenges of beginning their lives in America while volunteering to help others.

Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 58

From: Russia

Years in U.S.: 5

Years as a volunteer: 5

Olga came as a refugee to Chicago in 2002 from St. Petersburg, Russia, here she was a piano teacher. Olga chairs the Cultural Committee at Americans by Values; she volunteers at residences and nursing homes, arranging rehearsals and performing concerts given solely by the elderly residents. The Russian-speaking community values her devotion and commitment.

Olga Bashkina

Americans by Values

Sabina Pello



Community Treasure:

Kanta Khipple

Agency:

Asian Human Services

Nominator:

Abha Pandya

Age: 75

From: India

Years in U.S.: 42

Years as a volunteer: 22

Ms. Kanta Khipple has worked with the elderly population as a volunteer in many Asian American communities. She served on the board of Asian Human Services from 1995 to 2000. Currently, she is working with Apna Ghar and Loyola University to establish South Asian Senior House of Peace. The project will help seniors who are marginalized, or who have language barriers, economic difficulties, or are being abused or neglected with housing assistance and other social and health services.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 73

From: Iraq

Years in U.S.: 7

Years as a volunteer: 5

Dr. Roel Georgis

Assyrian National Council of Illinois

Isho Lilou

Since his arrival to the United States as a refugee from Iraq, Dr. Georgis has been very helpful in our community by sharing his skills and providing services of all kind. He airs weekly health programs at ANCI Radio. He lectures on many medical and health related subjects in our community meetings. He is very well regarded in our community!



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

From: Bosnia

Years in U.S.: 11

Years as a volunteer: 10

Mensura Periz

**Bosnian Herzegovinian American
Community Center**

Fadila Campara

Mrs. Periz, a refugee from Bosnia, has been our volunteer from the very beginning. She is very active in the women's group, helping with crafts and teaching our young girls Bosnian traditional handwork. She makes food for every one of our celebrations. She is an active advocate in Springfield when we meet with legislators to explain our needs. She promotes our agency in the best possible way.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 67

From: Cambodia

Years in U.S.: 27

Years as a volunteer: 25

Kandien Khoun

Cambodian Association of Illinois

Soty Gnet

Mr. Kandien Khoun first came to Chicago as a refugee in 1979, when the Cambodian Association of Illinois and the Cambodian Buddhist Temple were in dire need of assistance. The traits that make him stand out are his deep compassion and concern for the wellbeing of others in his community. Mr. Khoun remains a loyal volunteer, helping both at the center and the Temple.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 73

From: China

Years in U.S.: 15

Years as a volunteer: 10

Shu Ying Wu-Chen

Chinese American Service League

Yick Lun Mo

At the age of 73, Shu Ying Wu-Chen is a role model not only for her generation but for many generations to come. She always thinks of others before she thinks of herself. In 2000, she was elected to be a committee member of the Pine Tree Senior Center. She frequently visits the home-bound elderly in senior housing. Recently, she has also been a part-time Kitchen Helper at CASL. She never asks for rewards. What she is looking for is just a happy smile from the people she helps.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 89

From: Romania

Years in U.S. 16

Years as a volunteer: 15

Mr. Florian Buchiu, a refugee from Romania, is a dedicated volunteer. He is friendly to everyone he meets. He began helping us sending relief parcels to people back in Romania in 1989. Now he helps with the food pantry in the office and organizes cultural activities to keep Romanian culture alive in Chicago. He has been an inspiration to all of us at European American Association.

Florian Buchiu

European American Association

John Herman



Community Treasure:

Zitta Rit

Agency:

Ezra

Nominator:

Marina Shafran

Age: 78

From: Ukraine

Years in U.S.: 17

Years as a volunteer: 15

In May of 1998, Zitta Rit came as a refugee to Chicago. She established the Melody Choir of elderly women from the former Soviet Union 15 years ago to help other women with their adjustment challenges. She says, “I fell in love with this country because it gave me the opportunity to live a normal life, and to not be afraid of being a Jew. I like the treatment of children and the elderly here; it shows that this is a good country. For that reason our choir always sings ‘God Bless America.’”



Community Treasure:
Agency:

Lina Soroka
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
(HIAS Chicago)

Nominator:

Danielle Kuczera

Age: 67

From: Ukraine

Years in U.S.: 17

Years as a volunteer: 12

Lina came to the United States as a refugee in 1989, escaping religious persecution and anti-Semitism. Lina assumed responsibility for the HIAS Chicago location services in 1994. Lina has helped hundreds of family members reunite with long-lost relatives and friends. Lina sees her involvement as giving meaning and purpose to her life. We, at HIAS Chicago, see Lina as an irreplaceable member of our family.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 75

From: Japan

Years in U.S.: 43

Years as a volunteer: 10

Mrs. Atsuko Tamura

Japanese Americans Service Committee

Helen Nakayama

Mrs. Atsuko Tamura has provided translations and interpretations for the homemaker clients. In addition, Mrs. Tamura has accompanied clients to lengthy, and sometimes challenging, appointments at the IL Department of Human Services and Social Security. Mrs. Tamura's patience, cheerful personality and willingness to do whatever is necessary to assist my clients and others are the reason she is a Community Treasure.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 59

From: Korea

Years in U.S.: 7

Years as a volunteer: 4

Won Lee

Korean American Senior Center

Paul S. Yun

Mr. Lee came to Chicago to be reunited with his family. In Korea, he worked in finance and taught high school math. He came to KASC to volunteer as an office assistant. We quickly saw he was detail oriented and good with numbers. Even when his wife was seriously injured in a car accident, he continued to serve. Mr. Lee is a Community Treasure for his commitment, dedication, and compassion to serve the Korean elderly community.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 72

From: Laos

Years in U.S.: 24

Years as a volunteer: more than 20

Oune Siharath

Lao American Community Services

Somlith Visaysouk

For more than 20 years, Mr. Siharath has volunteered his time to help other Laotian refugees in Chicago and Elgin. He takes care of our people, giving rides to those who need them and assists at the Buddhist Temple with religious events. He has been a valuable Board member with the Lao American Community Services. He has been an inspiration to me for all the time I have known him.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 70

From: India

Years in U.S.: 34

Years as a volunteer: 14

Mrs. Shashi Singh

Metropolitan Asian Family Services

Santosh Kumar

Mrs. Singh helped Metropolitan Asian Family Services from the beginning, serving as the first secretary of MAFS. In the early days, she helped write the Community Care Program homemaker proposal, gathering resources and support letters for that purpose. She helps evaluate plans and future developments for the agency. She cheerfully and willingly gives her experience and talents in promoting the MAFS programs and helping our community.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 68

From: India

Years in U.S.: 27

Years as a volunteer: 7

Mrs. Duru Jeswani

Midwest Asian American Center

Vandana Dalal

An experienced tutor with ten years of experience, Ms. Jeswani teaches English and math to children from the ages of 7 to 11. She developed new strategies for the seniors and made it simple for them to learn in the classroom, understanding their needs and building confidence. She has patience and a sense of humor, and is a favorite teacher of the seniors. She volunteers 5 hours a day, 3 days a week. She is a real Community Treasure!



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 85

Country from: U.S.A

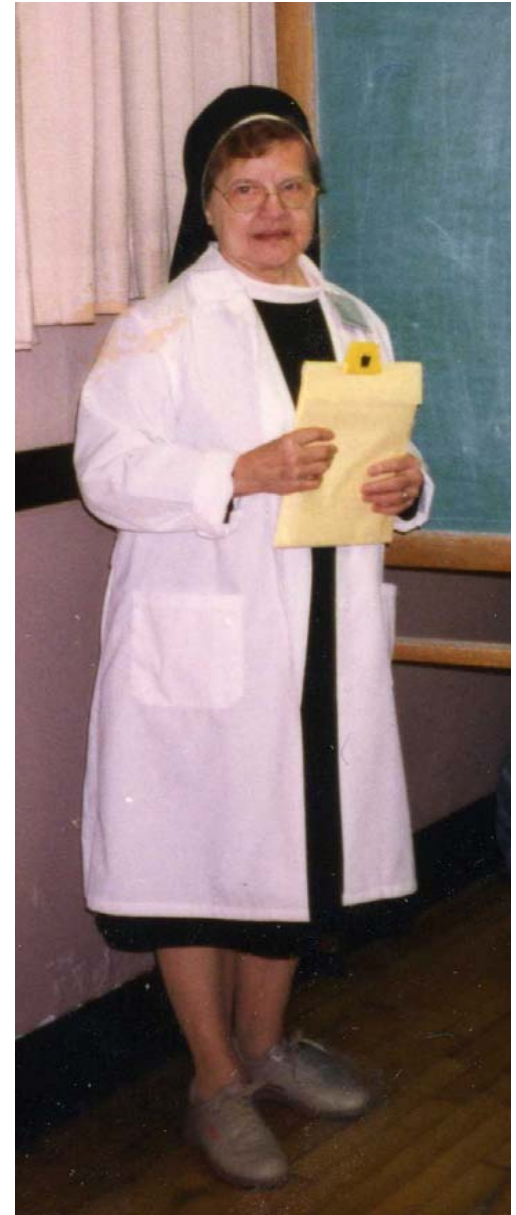
Years as a volunteer: 3

Sister Rosalita Wojtykunas

Polish American Association

Magdalena Dolas

Polish American Association nominates Sister Rosalita Wojtykunas, a child of immigrants, for her exceptional service. Since her retirement, Sister Rosalita has devoted over 2,000 hours as a volunteer helping students study for the Certified Nurse Assistant state exam. Sister Rosalita is bilingual in Polish and English; her experience has been critical to her students' success. At the age of 85, she amazes us with her incredible energy, new ideas and commitment to help her community.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 78

From: Romania

Years in U.S.: 70

Years as a volunteer: 5

Georgina Campos

Romanian American Community Center

Lily Olaru

Georgina has worked at Romanian American Community Center for five years. She speaks Romanian, English, Spanish and Polish, and she has given many hours of volunteer work in serving the elderly. Her dedication to the community and her readily available help are deeply appreciated.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 69

From: Hong Kong

Years in U.S.: 13

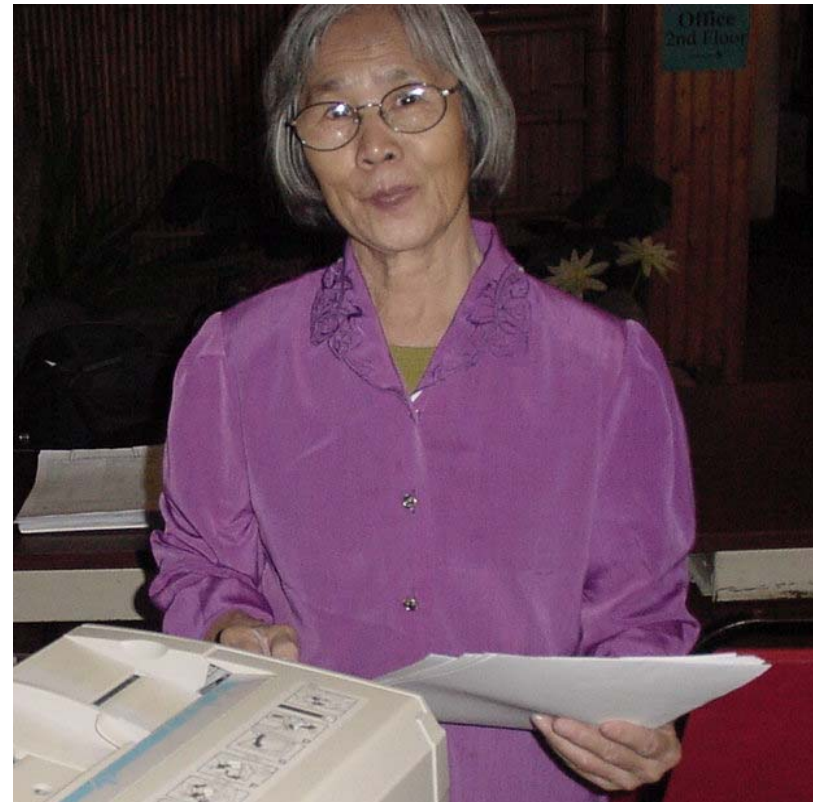
Years as a volunteer: 3

Mrs. Wai Chu Ku

South-East Asia Center

San O

Whenever we need help, Mrs. Ku is there to help us. For the last three years, Mrs. Ku has been assisting us in our Golden Diners Club, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and in other service programs. Mrs. Ku is never too busy to come. She is very responsible and always stays with us until the work is done regardless of the time of the day or the day of the week.



Community Treasure:

Agency:

Nominator:

Age: 64

From: Iraq

Years in U.S.: 4

Years as a volunteer: 4

Dr. Jeanette Youel

Urhai Community Service Center

Angel Kindo

Since her arrival as a refugee four years ago from Iraq, Dr. Youel has been very dedicated to the agency. She volunteers many hours assisting clients and providing information, especially on medical issues. She has conducted presentations on health topics such as osteoporosis and high blood pressure. She is consistently a good volunteer, flexible and kind to those who she is helping. I am proud to nominate her as a Community Treasure!

