



**Northern Marianas
Humanities Council**

Navigating the Human Experience

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
P.O. Box 506437
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Saipan, MP 96950



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ANNUAL REPORT FY 2020



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Northern Marianas Humanities Council



The Council offers matching grants to community organizations and ad hoc groups to support a wide range of humanities projects consistent with the goals and objectives of its Strategic Master Plan. In FY 2020, the Council awarded a total of \$77,959 in grants to support eleven (11) community projects.

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2020 BOARD OF Directors

- 1 Sacrificing Sovereignty for Citizenship - \$3,130**
An oral history project that examines the reasons the indigenous people of the CNMI voted in 1975 to become a U.S. Commonwealth.
- 2 Young Author's Book Publishing - \$6,600**
A publication project to support stories written in Chamorro and Carolinian by local K-12 student authors.
- 3 Ketungo Chamorro Season 2 - \$5,775**
A series of interactive educational lessons for learning the Chamorro language and cultural heritage.
- 4 Multicultural Music Mini Unit: Mariana Islands - \$3,926**
Music lesson plans using a collection of curated, authentic CNMI music.
- 5 Na lâ'la' itaotaotâno! Navigating the Performative Terrain in the Marianas - \$3,246**
A documentary that investigates the various cultural and musicological underpinnings from each of the distinct island communities in the Mariana Islands.

- 6 Documenting the Ada Gym Mural Project - \$4,350**
A documentary capturing the revitalization of the iconic Ada Gym Mural and the many expressions of contemporary artists in the Northern Mariana Islands.
- 7 500 Sails Canoe Building Instructional Videos - \$13,247**
A series of instructional videos on building a traditional Chamorro sailing proa using modern fiberglass materials.
- 8 Crafting the Covenant - \$11,690**
A documentary on the creation of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America and its impact on present-day residents of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- 9 Early Resettlement of the Marianas - \$6,100**
A publication on the resettlement of the Marianas people under the Spanish.
- 10 CNMI Educational Video Series - \$9,120**
A documentary series on the CNMI's history and culture featuring Rota's historical sites, WWII underwater wrecks and CNMI's historic role in WWII, and Amelia Earhart's disappearance.
- 11 The Origins & Evolution of Racism in America - \$10,775**
A film festival featuring "Amistad" and "Roots" and a public lecture on the origins of racism and the present-day state of race relations in America.

A MESSAGE FROM *The Chair*



Hafa Adai & Tirow! The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is excited to share our 2020 Annual Report with you, which highlights the tremendous work of our Council partners and community members at the forefront of showcasing the diversity and tenacity of our island communities. In the midst of the struggles associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we were pleased to award 38 COVID-19 Relief Grant Awards to assist community members in their promotion of Humanities-related content. The Council-related projects and Community Grant Awards that emerged in 2020 highlighted our peoples' stories and reminded us of the beauty of our shared island humanity.

The Council has continued to support the vital importance of learning about the diversity of our Marianas archipelago alongside the cultural distinctiveness of each island by highlighting Indigenous languages, music and art through community grant awards such as **Ketungo Chamorro Series** and **Na lâ'la' itaotaotâno! Navigating the Performative Terrain in the Marianas**. The importance of transmitting sustainable community knowledge practices to younger generations was highlighted in the **Young Author's Book Publishing** project and the **500 Sails Canoe Building Instructional Videos**. In addition, the Council has also supported the exploration of our deeply complex social and political histories through projects such as the **Early Resettlement of the Marianas** and **Sacrificing Sovereignty for Citizenship**. Lastly, the Council was pleased to uphold the exemplary work of individual community members such as **Anita Ayuyu Sablan**, **Eusebio Camacho Borja**, **Stephanie Soder** and **Ambrose Milton Bennet** whose life's work and scholarship are examples of dedication to the promotion of the humanities.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to extend a warm Si Yu'us Ma'âsi', Olomwaay and Thank You to the CNMI community members, partners and donors that supported these projects and helped bring them to life amidst trying times. Your unwavering commitment to supporting the Northern Marianas Humanities Council is humbly appreciated.

Un Dangkulunasi Yu'us Ma'âsi' yan Olomwaay,
Theresa (Isa) Arriola
Chair

COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT AWARDS

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act became law providing \$242,700 in supplemental funding to the Council to assist cultural institutions and humanities scholars and practitioners affected by the coronavirus. The Council reviewed 47 grant applications and issued a total of 38 awards to 20 individuals and 15 organizations. Grant awards were issued to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cultural institutions and humanities scholars and practitioners. Many subrecipients reported using grant funds to conduct new and existing projects and to acquire the tools and training to adapt their services and products to online platforms and audiences. Congratulations to the 2020 COVID-19 Relief Grant award recipients!

- 500 Sails
- Antonio C. Atalig Memorial Library
- Bernardo Rivera
- Caitlyn Crisostomo
- Catherine Perry
- Center for Living Independently
- CNNI Women's Association
- Connita Camacho
- Don Farrell
- Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library
- Friends of the Marianas Trench Monument
- Ignacia Reyes
- James Arriola
- Joeten-Kiyu Public Library
- Justise Quitugua
- Lady Diann Torres Foundation
- Leila Staffler
- Leoralynn Terlaje
- Lyzandra Barcinas
- Mariana Islands Nature Alliance
- Marianas Ukulele Festival Association
- Marvieluz Syed
- Nakita Braganza
- NMI Museum of History and Culture
- Pacific Historic Parks
- Rosalinda Ulloa
- Rose Lazaro
- Soley-Marie Kaipat
- Sophia Perez
- STELLAR Organization
- Team Koka
- Tinian Public Library
- Vincent Sablan
- Viola Marie Deleon Guerrero
- Viola S. Deleon Guerrero



INVEST *in the Humanities*

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is celebrating its 30th Anniversary! To ensure the sustainability of its operations and programs into the future, the Council has set its sights on establishing a \$1 million endowment by 2031. We ask that you consider making a donation today to support this goal. Financial donations to the Council of up to \$5,000 may be applied as an Educational Tax Credit. Send us an email: info@nmhcouncil.org for more details.

COUNCIL PROJECTS

23rd Governor's Humanities Awards

Each year during CNNI Humanities Month, the Council sponsors an event with the support of the Office of the Governor to recognize outstanding contributions to the humanities by individuals and organizations in our community.

Stephanie Soder received the Preservation of CNNI History award for her role for documenting over 30 oral history accounts from among members of the CNNI community as part of a study on the Chamorro and Carolinian post-WWII internment camps in modern-day Susupe and Chalan Kanoa.

Anita Ayuyu Sablan received the Outstanding Humanities Teacher award for her role as a teacher and faculty advisor for Marianas High School's ProthiOnraLengguahikKuttura Saipan Atahilnasa (POLKSAI) Chamorro Club where she actively engages students in learning the Chamorro language and culture through the performing arts.

Eusebio Camacho Borja received the Preservation of Traditional Culture award for preserving the use of the karetaguaka (ox cart), traditional methods of domesticating livestock, and for building the guma' higa (Chamorro thatched house) along the Civic Center Beach in Susupe, Saipan.

Ambrose Milton Bennet received the Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities award for his contributions to the humanities as a classroom teacher, book author, prolific op-ed writer, and scholar.



Motherread/Fatheread® CNNI

Motherread/Fatheread® CNNI helps families create a literacy rich home environment. This is achieved year-round by conducting literacy courses for adults and story exploring sessions with children. In FY2020, sixty-three adults completed the eight-hour literacy course and 498 children engaged in a story exploring session.

Your Humanities Half Hour

Your Humanities Half-Hour (YHHH) radio show produced 44 shows on a variety of humanities topics aired weekly on Power99 radio. The shows are also made available to the public on the Council's YouTube channel. One notable accomplishment for this project is national recognition accorded to it in the article, Radio Broadcasts: Local Stories, published in the Fall 2019 edition of Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The most viewed YHHH show on YouTube in FY2020 was an interview with Matthew Masga on the use of spondylus shells for jewelry and as a symbol of Chamorro cultural identity.

Marianas Stories

The Council conducted 12 Facebook Live interviews as part of its monthly Marianas Stories project to feature "ordinary people with extraordinary life stories". An interview with Rose "Chailang" Palacios garnered the highest online engagement, reactions, and comments.

Racial Equality and Civil Unrest

Racial Equality and Civil Unrest featured a series of interviews with Commonwealth residents to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues of racial inequality and discrimination in our society. This project was conceived amidst the growing public demonstrations and protests throughout the U.S. in response to the killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man who was killed during an arrest in Minnesota on May 26, 2020. Interviews with Dr. Beylul Solomon, John Davis, Thomas Mangloña, Gordon Marciano, and Joe Hill were broadcast on social media between June 29 – July 27, 2020.

Humanities Fridays

The Council launched Humanities Fridays in October 2020 in celebration of CNNI Humanities Month featuring ten distinct humanities topics in a one-hour Zoom webinar presentation:

- **Tip of the Spear: How Mariana Islanders See Their Relationship with the US Military** by Sophia Perez
- **Meet Soroptimists of the Northern Mariana Islands** by Marilyn Marron, Maureen Sebangiol, and Pam Brown
- **Adaptive Strategies to Food Insecurity within the Chuukese Community of Guam** by Hanna Jugo
- **I TilaikaanNumirugiFino' CHamoru: Changes in Chamorro Plurality** by Fu'una Sanz
- **Democracy and the Informed Citizen** by Thomas Mangloña
- **Hâyi Ham Pâ'go: Understanding How Chamoru Identity and Acculturation Styles Affect the Psychological Well-Being of Third Generation World War II Chamoru People in Guam** by VanaQuichocho
- **Ti Un Chuli' Huhu' GiLanghet** by Joey P. San Nicholas and Kimberly King-Hinds
- **Tiningo' Fama'tão'an: Oral Histories & Non-fiction Stories of Chamorro Women** by KayleTydingco
- **Super Typhoon Yutu: The Human Experience** by Leonard Leon

This Day in History

The Council produced two short, one-minute video clips to promote awareness of important events in the history of the CNNI through its social media channels. The first video featured the work of the Third Constitutional Convention and resulting Special Election on March 2, 1996 that put 19 proposed amendments to the CNNI Constitution before CNNI voters. The second video featured the eruption of Mount Pagan on May 15, 1981.

I Minagâhet / Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the CNNI

The Council conducted a community survey in October to November 2020 to assess key indicators of CNNI resident engagement in local news, news media literacy, and involvement in local civic and political processes. The study was funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's 2019 Democracy and the Informed Citizen Initiative grant, administered through the Federation of State Humanities Councils. A total of 481 respondents completed the survey and the Council has plans to disseminate results in a public forum in 2021.

CNNI Humanities Month

In addition to hosting Humanities Fridays and the 23rd Governor's Humanities Awards in October 2020 in celebration of CNNI Humanities Month, the Council facilitated talks with scholars on KKMP Radio's Morning Show and partnered with the Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguigan to co-sponsor Tinian's Virtual Humanities Week. Tinian's Virtual Humanities Week featured a read-aloud of "I duendes" by Cielo Long; a food demonstration by Julie and Dorothy San Nicolas; an interpretation of an original Chamorro song by Joseph T. San Nicolas; the interpretation and history of Chamorro dance by Eric Reyes and; the process for making coconut oil by Bobby Diamond and Dorothy San Nicolas.

Pride Talks Writing Contest

In June 2020, the Council launched a writing contest inviting the LGBTQ+ community to submit written works on their experience in the CNNI. The following individuals and works were recognized as winners of this competition:

Saipan
1st Place: Leovita Cabrera, "A Crowded Closet"
2nd Place: Thomas Mangloña, "Gateways"
3rd Place: Prudencio Cabrera, "Heels"

Rota
1st Place: Colin Jay Cruz, "Your Out is My Out"
2nd Place: Freya Deshae Greathouse, "Mirror Image"
3rd Place: Jermaine Chloe Young, "It's Okay, We're Normal"

Tinian
1st Place: Pedro Mangloña, "I Know a Boy"
2nd Place: Joseph Hocog, "The Creation of LGBTQ Pride"

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Kayle Tydingco, Thomas Mangloña,
Melanie Hangca, Eric Reyes,
Cecilio Raiukiulipiy, Milton Coleman, Jr.,
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Carmen Taimañao, Dr. Carlos Madrid,
Dr. Michael Clement, Jr., Marilynn Marron,
Maureen Sebangiol, Hanna Jugo,
and Leonard Leon

Council-Conducted Projects By the Numbers

31 total in-person humanities activities with **981** participants
95 total virtual humanities activities with **55,136** participants
48 total new tv programs, films, radio segments, and podcast episodes with **5,421** viewers and listeners

Grant Recipient - Conducted Projects By the Numbers

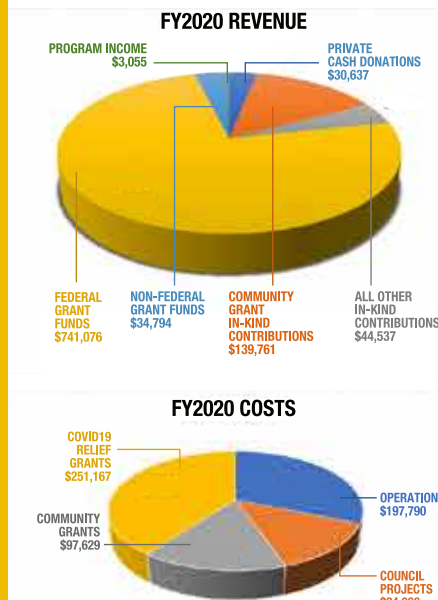
2 total in-person humanities activities with **66** participants
4 total virtual humanities activities with **2001** participants
12 total new tv programs, films, radio segments, and podcast episodes with **2001** viewers and listeners

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

The Council's partnership with the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library (JKPL) is an example of an effective, long-standing partnership that continues to be strategic, sustainable, and supportive of the Council's mission. The overarching goal of this partnership is to promote literacy in the community. Through this partnership, the Council leverages JKPL staff, space, and events to facilitate Motherread/Fatheread® CNMI courses and outreach activities. Motherread/Fatheread® CNMI is a Council-conducted program whose mission is to help families create a literacy rich home environment. The program's core staff comprise of current and former employees of JKPL who utilize an office within the JKPL facility to store program materials, conduct meetings, and organize activities. The dedicated office space in JKPL includes a phone line and access to high speed internet and access to network printing and copy services. As members of the JKPL team, Motherread/Fatheread® CNMI core staff are in a unique position to integrate program recruitment and outreach activities into events and activities sponsored by JKPL. At the end of the year, the JKPL Director provides the Council with a letter certifying the value of in-kind contributions made by JKPL in support of this partnership. The cost-sharing activities realized through this partnership has the added value of supporting the Council's NEH grant-matching requirements.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



2021-2025 STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

Looking ahead, beyond the reef, the Council is actively navigating its canoe to achieve the following strategic goals over the next five years:

GOAL 1

Preserve and promote the indigenous languages and cultures of the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI).

GOAL 2

Develop and improve educational programs in literacy and language.

GOAL 3

Increase publications and scholarship in the humanities.

GOAL 4

Promote the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the NMI.

GOAL 5

Provide capacity-building activities for individuals to acquire the skills and tools to create their own humanities content and programs.