COVID-19 RELIEF GRANT AWARDS

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act became law providing $2.2 trillion 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 26 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 recipients 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 Siail
Amolit C. Atai Memorial Library
Bernardo Rivero
Caytlyn Creasman
Catherine Perry
Center for Living Independently
CMLI Woman’s Association
Carmela Camacho
Don Tarrant
Friends of the Joetsu-Kiyu Public Library
Friends of the Marinas Trench Monument
Ignota Reyes
James Arrilla
Joetsu-Kiyu Public Library
Justice Dutaguma
Lady Diann Towers Foundation
Loela Barcelo
Liora Danik
Luzardina Baccas
Marinara Islands Nature Alliance
Marinas Ukelele Festival Association
Marivel Syed
N Vicente
NMI Museum of History and Culture
Pacific Historic Parks
Rosalia Ulpia
Rose Lazaru
Soleo Marie Kapan
Sofia Perez
STEELFAR Organization
Team Koa
T MAN Public Library
Vincent Sullivan
Vivian Marie Deleon Guerrero
Vivda S. Delos Guerrero

23rd Governor’s Humanities Awards
Each year during CNMI 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 CNMI History award for her role for documenting over 30 oral history accounts from among members of the CNMI community as part of a study on the Chamorro and Carolinian pre-WWI emigrant camps in modern-day Susupe and Chalan Kanoa.

Anita Agyu Sablan received the Outstanding Humanities Teacher award for her role as a teacher and faculty advisor for Marianas High School’s PotenOaInahenggch/Kultura Saipan AhaBina (POICSA) Chamorro Club where she actively engages students in learning the Chamorro language and culture through the performing arts.

Eusebio Camacho Serpa received the Preservation of Traditional Culture award for preserving the use of the karateganga (ox cart), traditional methods of domesticating livestock, and for building the guina’talag (Chamorro thatched house) at the Civic Center Beach in Susupe, Saipan.

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

Mothereld/Fatherhood - CNMI
Mothereld/Fatherhood - CNMI helps families create a literacy rich home environment. This is achieved year-round by conducting literacy courses for adults and story-telling sessions with children. In FY2020, sixty-three adults completed the eight-hour literacy course and 45 children engaged in a story-telling session.

Your Humanities Half Hour
Your Humanities Half Hour (YHH) radio show produced 44 shows on a variety of humanities topics aired weekly on CNMI radio. The shows are also made available to the public on the Council’s YouTube channel. One notable accomplishment for this project was the 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 Hour show on YouTube in FY2020 was an interview with Matthew Maseg on the use of spondylosis shell for jewelry and as a symbol of Chamorro cultural identity.

Marinas Stories
The Council conducted 12 Facebook Live interviews as part of its monthly Marinas Stories project to feature “ordinary people with extraordinary lives stories”. An interview with Rose “Chishang” Palacios garnered the highest online engagement, reactions, and comments.

Racial Equity and Civil Unrest
Racial Equity 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 Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. Interviews with Dr. Beryl Solomon, John Davis, Thomas Manglona, Gordon Marciano, and Joe Hill were broadcast on social media between June 20 - July 27, 2020.

COUNCIL PROJECTS

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

- "The Tip of the Spear: How Mariana Islanders See Their Relationship with the US Military" by Stephanie Soder
- "Meet Some of the Northern Marianas Islands" by Marilyn Mearns, Maureen Salingbarg, and Paul Brown
- "Adaptive Strategies to Food Insecurity within the Guatacua Community of Guam" by Hanne Iwai
- ""The Inheriting/Finding/Finishing Chamorro" in Chamorro by Dr. Mary Jane Nagasawa
- "Democracy and the Informed Citizen" by Theresa Manglona
- "Here and Now: Understanding How Chamorros Identify and Acculturate Styles to the Psychological Well-being of Future Generation" by Dr. Raul M. Guzman
- "Time“ and "Hula" by Dr. Joseph A. Santos and Kimberly King-Hinds
- "The Chasing of" by Dr. Alan Ngataua
- "Super Typhoon Yutu: The Human Experience by Leonard Leon"
- "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 CNMI through its social media channels. The first video featured the work of the Third Constitutional Convention and resulted in Special Election on March 2, 1988. The second video featured the eruption of Mount Palah on May 15, 1981.

I Minaghat / Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the CNMI
The Council conducted a community survey in October-November 2020 to assess key indicators of CNMI readership 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 Federal Council for 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.

CNMI Humanities Month
In addition to hosting Humanities Fridays and the 23rd Governor’s Humanities Awards in October 2020 in celebration of CNMI Humanities Month, the Council facilitated talks with scholars on KNP Radio’s Morning Show and partnered with the Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Agugan to co-sponsor Tinian’s Virtual Humanities Week. Tinian’s Virtual Humanities Week featured a round-up of “I channel” by Cielo Long; a food demonstration by Julie and Dority 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 Bobby3 Smith and Dority 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 CNMI. The following individuals and works were recognized as winners of this competition:

- 1st Place:
  - Lerisa DeHart, “A Crowded Closet”
  - 2nd Place:
    - Thomas Manglona, “Gayworks”
    - 3rd Place:
      - Prudence Dapat, “Hebli”
- 2nd Place:
  - Deen Jaz Crow, “You Can’t Tell My Out”
  - 3rd Place:
    - Freya Deen Guadalupe, “Mirror Image”
    - 4th Place:
      - Jeannette Cepeda, “When We’re Normal”

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is celebrating its 35th 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@nmhncouncil.org for more details.
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:

1. **Sacrificing Sovereignty for Citizenship - $3,130**
   An oral history project that examines the reasons the indigenous people of the CNM 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. **Kotutu 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 Hiti'itaotaoat'it Navigating the Performative Terrain in the Mariana - $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 - $4,380**
   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 canoe using modern fiberglass materials.

8. **Crafting the Covenant - $11,680**
   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 Mariana - $6,100**
   A publication on the resettlement of the Mariana 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 Race 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.

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**

Hafa Adai & Tiowl! 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 Mariana’s archipelago alongside the cultural distinctiveness of each island by highlighting Indigenous languages, music and art through community grant awards such as Kotutu Chamorro Series and Na Hiti’itaotaoat’it Navigating the Performative Terrain in the Mariana’s. 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 deep cultural and historical narratives through projects such as the Early Resettlement of the Mariana’s and Sacrificing Sovereignty for Citizenship. Lastly, the Council was pleased to uphold the exemplary work of individual community members such as Antilla Ayuyu Sablan, Esselbe Genatchie Berin, Stephanie Sober and Ambrose Milton Benneff 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’as’i, Oñma’say 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 Mariana’s Humanities Council is humbly appreciated.

Un Dangkalumasi Si Yu’us Ma’as’i’ yan Oñma’say,
Theresa [I’im] Auriola
Chair
The Council’s partnership with the Jueten-Kyu 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 Mothered/Fathered® CNMI courses and outreach activities. Mothered/Fathered® CNMI is a Council-conducted program whose mission is to help families create a literacy rich home environment. The program’s core staff comprises 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, Mothered/Fathered® 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.

2021-2025 STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

Looking ahead, beyond the reef, the Council is actively navigating its course 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.