



NAVIGATING THE PRESENT,
SHAPING THE FUTURE

Bayanihan AWARDS GALA

A CELEBRATION OF LEADERSHIP,
CULTURE & COMMUNITY

EXCLUSIVELY THE
BAYANIHAN GALA

ON
AUGUST 15, 2026
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

An evening of reflection, elegance,
and profound gratitude.
The Bayanihan Gala is the definitive
celebration of real-world excellence—
honoring those who lead, serve,
and empower our community.



HYATT REGENCY AURORA
DENVER CONFERENCE CENTER
AURORA, DENVER, COLORADO

View the Gala Page





Bayanihan Awards Gala and Fashion Show

Saturday Evening Program

Registration & Reception

Guests arrive • Photo Opportunities • Networking

Opening Ceremony

United States National Anthem

Philippine National Anthem

Invocation

Introduction of the Master of Ceremonies

Welcome Address

Jennifer Samuel

NaFFAA Region V President

Dinner Service

Keynote Address

Carabao Awards

Installation & Oath of Office

Filipino Fashion Show & Cultural Storytelling

Opening Presentation

Michael Dadap playing José Rizal – Dulce Las Horas



Gala Performance Group



Originally established as FACC Cultural, the dance performance group has been around for decades. After the FACC's 70th anniversary in 2024, the group had been rebranded as Padayon Cultural by President Vivian Egonio-Norman.

Padayon Cultural's dance program brings the rich diversity of Filipino culture to life through movement. From barrio folk dances to Spanish-influenced and Indigenous-inspired movements, each dance tells a story of heritage, community, and identity.

Dancers of all ages are welcome to explore Filipino rhythms, footwork, songs, and attire, gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural roots behind each movement. Performances not only entertain but also educate audiences about the Philippines' diverse communities. Through dance, Padayon nurtures a connection to Filipino heritage while inspiring a love of the arts in the next generation.



Dance Directors:
Danielle Stratton & Jason de Vera

Youth Directors:
Nicole Galvan, Namdev Palalay, & Danielle Stratton



Bayanihan Awards Gala and Fashion Show

Act I Founders & Trailblazers

A Journey Through Philippine Heritage
Carinosa by the FACC Performers & Rondalla

Act II Health Professionals, Frontliners, & Educators

Celebrating Regional Traditions
Pandango sa Ilaw by FACC Performers & Rondalla

Act III Emerging Leaders & Entrepreneurs

A Vision of Modern Filipiniana
Rap by Meta Sarmiento

Grand Finale

Featuring All Designers, Models & Performers
Hip Hop Tinikling by FACC Performers
& Special Guest Jack Rushford
Curtain Call
The Last Walk
Supporting NaFFAA's leadership, youth,
and community initiatives

Closing Remarks

Sponsor Recognition & Acknowledgments
Celebration & Dancing
Featuring Richi Ramos





Bayanihan Fashion Show

ACT I

MODEL	DESIGNER
Thelma Lassig NaFFAA Utah, President	Dasan Export
Virgit Vanek Ex Fundraising Director for NaFFAA V	Virgit Vanek
Donna LaVigne Honorary Consul for Colorado and Wyoming	Dhyun Amore Duque
Gloria Villaver Williams NaFFAA Region V Treasurer/ Board of Director	Filipino Designer
Resty Lopez President- Balayan Las Vegas Association; Auditor - DMR; Auditor - NaFFAA -Nevada	Chona Estacio
Giselle Rushford NaFFAA Trustee/Secretary	Kultura
Mariela Fletcher NaFFAA National Chair	Chat Khan
Gloria Caoile NaFFAA Desert Mountain Region Senior Advisor	Ramon Valera
Benjamin Ricardo Caoile	Traditional
Sally Balecha NaFFAA Desert Mountain Region President	Alfonso "Boy" Ginoo
Dolly Specht NaFFAA Oregon President	PamPinay





Bayanihan Fashion Show

ACT II

MODEL	DESIGNER
Genesis Africa First lady of Dr. Alexander Africa NaFFAA Vice President, Final Walk	Dhyun Amore Duque
Marlene Perez NAFFAA Member and former Secretary	Handcrafted in Manila, Philippines
Joyce Dutton Working mom and Caregiver to toddlers	Handcrafted in Manila, Philippines
Dr. Stacey Diane A. Litam Keynote speaker Associate Professor	The Mestizo
Arminda Aguilar NaFFAA Region V Auditor	Jojo Martinez
Dr. Michael StaJuana President	Edwin Uy
Carmeliza “Zha Zha” dela Paz Dentist (DDS), Vice President Philippine American Society of Colorado	Kirsten Regalado
Flor Liza Obana Teacher (retired) Cherry Creek School District #4	Ramil Estrope President of Philippine Designer Guild
Edith Pasion Vice President for Mission Uplift International	Frankie De Leon
Mark Perez Physical Therapist	Jor El Espina
Anna Perez Aesthetician	Jor El Espina





Bayanihan Fashion Show

ACT III

MODEL	DESIGNER
Amy Silver American Furniture Warehouse Visual Designer	Blue Angelic Creations
Kaela Malaki Founder of Lola Severina	Amihan Artisans
Jacqueline de Joya NaFFAA National Board of Trustees	Alfonso "Boy" Ginoo
Loida Norton Mrs. Woman of the World 2025	Dhyun Amore Duque
Dhyun Amore Duque Cheyenne Filipino-American Club President and CEO of Amore Floral and Events LLC, Final Walk	Dhyun Amore Duque
Joshua Acervo Ang Price National Executive Director, NaFFAA	John Carlo Llamoso
Shiela DeForest Founder of Amihan Artisans, Area Director of Gawad Kalinga USA Denver	Ritchie Teves x Amihan Artisans
Bella Knowles Founder, Baro Manila	Ditta Sandico
Nessa Whitney Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity, Corporate Engagement & Event Manager	Kalinga Cultural Bearer Jenny Bawer Young
Charmel Dela Cruz State President NaFFAA AZ Chapter	Jean Amour
Marie Villareal NaFFAA AZ Treasurer	Jean Amour





Bayanihan Fashion Show

ACT III

MODEL	DESIGNER
Agnes Lopez Business Owner and Entrepreneur, Commercial Photographer	Lin-ay by Binky Pitogo
Julie D Martinez NaFFAA Arizona Secretary	Julie D Martinez
Dr. Maria Obis NaFFAA 5 Vice President	Dhyun Amore Duque
Miles Guardiano PASCO President	Jor-El Espina
Patricia Cruzado Naffaa Colorado President	Dhyun Amore Duque
Hannah Tolentino TFC News Correspondent/ Content Creator/Host	Angela Taloza
Lilyann Freking High School Student	Bamba Limon
Vivian Norman President of Filipino American Community of Colorado	Amihan Artisans
Gabriel Young NaFFAA NorCal President, FAHNS Youth Advisory Council	Francis Libiran
Natividad Cura DeFrances Arizona NaFFAA Vice President	LoveJoy Couture LLC Arizona
Maddie Vines National NaFFAA Trustee	Filipiniana





A Message of *Gratitude*

As we gather to celebrate the **NaFFAA National Empowerment Conference Gala**, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to NaFFAA National, NaFFAA Region V—our gracious host—and everyone whose dedication made this extraordinary celebration possible.

Thank you for honoring the rich heritage, culture, traditions, and legacy of the Filipino American community while advancing NaFFAA's mission of advocacy, leadership, civic engagement, and empowerment.

Our sincere congratulations to the **National Empowerment Conference Planning Committee**, the **Gala and Fashion Show Committee**, our distinguished speakers, cultural performers, award recipients, volunteers, sponsors, and every individual whose passion and service made this event both elegant and memorable.

A special thank you to Dhyun Amore Duque for the artistry, creativity, and craftsmanship behind the beautiful Maria Clara gown, a timeless expression of Filipino heritage and cultural pride that adds grace and meaning to this unforgettable evening.

May this conference continue to inspire future generations to lead with integrity, serve with compassion, and celebrate the enduring spirit of Bayanihan.

**Congratulations on a successful
National Empowerment Conference and Gala.**

*Mabuhay ang NaFFAA.
Mabuhay ang Filipino American Community.
Mabuhay ang Pilipinas.*

Genesis Africa

Mabuhay, distinguished guests, honored dignitaries, community leaders, sponsors, friends, and members of our Filipino-American community.

As I take my final walk this evening, I do so with profound gratitude, immense humility, and a heart filled with thanksgiving.

Above all, I give thanks to Almighty God, whose grace, wisdom, and unfailing guidance have made this remarkable evening possible.

Tonight has been more than a fashion presentation—it has been a celebration of our Filipino identity, our heritage, and the timeless artistry that continues to unite generations of Filipinos around the world.

It has been both an honor and a privilege to design and create the six Filipiniana masterpieces presented this evening. Each creation reflects not only the elegance of our traditional attire but also the resilience, dignity, and enduring spirit of the Filipino people. To my six extraordinary models, thank you for wearing every design with grace, confidence, and poise. You transformed each piece into a living expression of our culture, and for that, I am sincerely grateful.

I extend my deepest appreciation to our distinguished guests whose presence has elevated this celebration: **Patricia Cruzado**, President of NAFFAA Colorado; Honorary Consul **Donna LaVigne**; **Loida Norton** of Women of the World 2026; **Dr. Maria Obis**, NAFFAA Region V Vice President; and **Genesis Africa**, Reyna Emperatriz Wyoming 2026. Your dedication to leadership, cultural preservation, and community service continues to inspire us all.

To my beloved husband, **Kurt Smith**, thank you for your unwavering love, steadfast encouragement, and constant support. Your belief in my vision has given me the strength to pursue my passion and serve our community with purpose.

Serving as the **Founding President of the Cheyenne Filipino-American Club since 2024**, and now for three consecutive years as its President, has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. Together, we have built not only an organization, but a family united by our shared commitment to preserving, promoting, and celebrating the richness of Filipino culture here in Wyoming.

As the owner of **Amore Floral and Events**, every design I create is a reflection of my love for our heritage. My hope is that through art, fashion, and culture, we continue to inspire future generations to embrace their identity with pride and confidence.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to **NAFFAA National** for the resounding success of this year's **16th National Empowerment Conference**. It was truly an exceptional gathering that united Filipino-American leaders, professionals, advocates, and community organizations from across the nation. It was an honor to participate, to meet remarkable individuals, to establish meaningful connections, and to exchange ideas that will strengthen and empower our communities for years to come. Thank you to the National Board and every organizer whose dedication made this inspiring conference possible. Your leadership continues to uplift and unite Filipino-Americans across the United States.

Finally, my sincere gratitude goes to our sponsors, donors, volunteers, board members, supporters, and every guest who shared this memorable evening with us. Your generosity, trust, and commitment are the foundation upon which events like this become possible. Because of you, our mission to preserve our heritage and strengthen our community continues to flourish.

As we conclude this beautiful celebration, may we remember that our culture is not merely something we inherit—it is a legacy we are entrusted to preserve, celebrate, and pass on with pride to future generations.

Thank you for allowing me to share my passion, my creativity, and my heart with all of you this evening.

Maraming salamat po. May God continue to bless each and every one of you.

Mabuhay ang kulturang Pilipino. Mabuhay ang Filipino-American community. Mabuhay tayong lahat.

Sincerely,


Dhyun Amore M. Duque

Cheyenne Filipino-American Club, President

