

Asian Avenue

May 2020

magazine

Volume 15
Issue 4



2020
ASIAN AMERICAN
HEROES *of*
COLORADO



CHANCE HORIUCHI

Executive Director of THE HAVANA BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Chance Jackie Mika Horiuchi was taught by her okaasan—Japanese for mother—to live each day with a grateful heart, always do and be her best self and to do things for others “just because.” These are the mantras that guide Horiuchi’s life and community work.

As the executive director of the Havana Business Improvement District (also known as On Havana Street), she is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the business district along 4.3 miles on Havana Street in Aurora. The Havana Business Improvement District was created in 2007 by business and neighborhood leaders and the City of Aurora to build a stronger, better community in the area. “On Havana Street is the largest and most diverse business corridor in the country,” Horiuchi says “I truly love all the diverse eateries and small business owners in this corridor, which is making a difference by focusing on unique, culturally diverse events and fun new things to do to make the lives of our residents and visitors more interesting.”

In addition to her work with On Havana Street, Horiuchi serves as co-chair elect of the Aurora/Asian Pacific Community Partnership and was formerly the business development director with the Aurora Chamber, which led to her position as executive director of the Havana Business Improvement District. She also volunteers for many organizations and groups, in-

cluding Aurora Sister Cities International, Aurora Chamber Young Professionals, the Mile High JACL, Mile High Behavioral Health Center, Comitis Crisis Center, Colfax Community Network and the Colorado Freedom Memorial.

“Chance builds strong and lasting business and community relationships,” says Frankie Anderson, a friend and colleague who nominated her for the award. “Ohana is what defines Chance’s spirit. Not only is family important, but she welcomes all her neighbors and friends of all ethnicities into her world of excitement.”

Horiuchi’s greatest achievement is moving from Wahiawā, Hawai‘i, the pineapple town where she was born and raised, to attend school at the University of Northern Colorado 14 years ago—something she couldn’t have done without the support of her okaasan. “I overcame so many obstacles and my family and I made so many sacrifices for me to go away for school. I worked three jobs in high school and still danced hula, participated in two sports and many other extracurricular activities.”

Volunteering and giving back to causes that mean the world to her make Horiuchi feel “whole and complete.” “It’s also important to me because over the years I have been so blessed and feel that I need to give back so that others have opportunities or access,” she says. “I feel that I volunteer so much because I feel that I must do what I can to lift someone else up or help someone else in need.”

Horiuchi advises younger generations to be open to other opportunities,

stretch and invest in themselves, and to keep learning and improving. Her advice comes from experience since she started her career in the medical field and never thought she’d go into business. “If I didn’t explore other industries and opportunities offered to me then I would have never found myself in Colorado in community relations, and business and economic development today,” she says.



Chance Horiuchi (middle) at Global Fest 2017 with Aurora Mayor Hogan and friends



At Utah Park National Night Out with Aurora Police Department representatives



Horiuchi (second from right) volunteers to spread awareness about Census 2020