



KAYA

Filipino Americans for Progress

Press Release

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***** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** *****

CONGRESSMAN HONDA HONORED AT KAYA LAUNCH PARTY AND ORGANIZATION ANNOUNCES STRATEGY TO ENGAGE THE FILIPINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN THE 2010 ELECTIONS

September 30, 2009 (*San Francisco, CA*) –KAYA's launch party and first anniversary, visited by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, Congressman Mike Honda, District Attorney Kamala Harris, and other local community leaders, filled the upper floor of Roe restaurant on Monday, September 28 and energized a crowd of young Filipino Americans poised for action. Congressman Mike Honda was also presented with a special honor for his contribution to the Filipino community.

KAYA announced that it is gearing up to play a big role in engaging Filipino Americans statewide in the California 2010 elections. As the organization who volunteered nearly 6,000 collective hours, mobilized over 600 volunteers nationwide, and contacted over 24,000 voters during the 2008 presidential campaign for Barack Obama, KAYA is preparing to take its mobilization efforts to a new level in the coming year.

Dexter Ligot Gordon, chair of KAYA, talked about KAYA's values and the organization's vision to make an impact in next year's elections, including the specific strategies that KAYA will employ to carry out its mission to mobilize the Filipino American community and build partnerships to increase the community's electoral power. The core of KAYA's 2010 strategy will be to engage the community in the political process through events that will introduce the candidates to the community and the community to the candidates. KAYA plans to extend an invitation to each campaign that will provide an opportunity for the candidates to engage in a dialogue with the Filipino American community through traditional outreach such as townhall meetings and creative communications such as online multimedia.

KAYA announced this strategy at the launch party on September 28 to a crowd of young Filipino American professionals and community activists who helped to deliver key votes in California, Nevada, and many other states during the 2008 presidential election. The evening's program included welcoming remarks by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. Mayor Newsom spoke to the need for community activists to "stand up and step in." He commended KAYA for its work in the 2008 presidential election and for "not just getting involved in a campaign and walking away" but for continuing to make a difference and engaging the community in the "spirit of partnerships, building bridges, and bringing people together." After an introduction by San Francisco Supervisor Board President David Chiu, District Attorney Harris spoke about why Barack Obama was engaging to those uninvolved with the political process, why the younger generations find hope in grassroots movement, and that there is a big struggle ahead to "make real the promises of our country."

Mark Grafilo, KAYA's San Francisco Chapter Director reiterated KAYA's mission and vision for the future before asking the attendees to make a promise to help their community by getting involved. He then presented Congressman Honda with an engraved karaoke Magic Mic. "You have lived the life of service," said Grafilo to Congressman Honda before presenting the award. Grafilo celebrated Honda's work in fighting for the Filipino community and standing up for Filipino veterans, health care, and immigration reform. Congressman Honda accepted the award to a lively applause and spoke to fighting for immigration reform, reuniting families, and being inclusive.

"This is a time of great need," said Congressman Honda. "Question authority. The politicians are not there for you; they're there to fulfill the constitution. We should be people conscious. Do the right thing...and we all know what that is."

For more information about KAYA: Filipino Americans for Progress and to join the KAYA leadership team or volunteer, visit <http://www.kayagrassroots.org>.

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KAYA is a progressive grassroots organization previously known as Filipinos for Obama. During the Obama campaign, KAYA volunteers successfully reached out to thousands of voters and helped to deliver key votes in California, Nevada and many other states. Today, KAYA focuses on electoral mobilization, policy advocacy, and leadership development through internship and mentorship programs. KAYA believes in the power of civic engagement and volunteerism. Find out more at <http://www.kayagrassroots.org>.