

## APA Leadership Institute Collaborates With Latino Group

By BILLIE LEE

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CUPERTINO, Calif. — Michael Chang, the former mayor of Cupertino and the founder of Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute (APALI) and Ruben Abrica, present mayor of East Palo Alto, have collaborated to form APALI's Civic Leadership for Community Empowerment.

The 10-week program emphasizes community and civic leadership training for Latino and Asian Americans who are emerging civic leaders, young professionals, community volunteers, and college students interested in broadening involvement in community affairs, in nonprofit boardmanship, government appointed boards and commissions, and in serving in local elected office.

Chang noted that the program is open to those of any background who wants to learn more about issues in Latino and Asian communities.

Asian Americans and Latinos represent two-thirds of the population in Silicon Valley and the two largest ethnic groups in the area.

Chang, who is the director of Asian American Studies at De Anza College, and Abrica, who teaches Chicano Studies at the college, see a need to prepare people for leadership in their respective communities.

With the changes in demographics, state Assemblywoman Sally Lieber noted that presently, those representing the people in government do not look like the community.

"It is critical," she said, "to have representation from people in the community and it is important to start grooming leaders for the future."

The goal of APALI's Civic Leadership for Community Empower-



**EMPOWERING** — (l to r) APALI founder Michael Chang, state Assemblywoman Sally Lieber, Comerica Bank President Mike Fulton and East Palo Alto Mayor Ruben Abrica.  
photo by Billie Lee/ Nichi Bei Times

ment is to fortify ties between two groups around issues both care about such as anti-immigration or English-only movements. It also can help to build bridges in areas where there may be contentions.

It was noted by the *Mercury News* recently that in Cupertino, for instance, "white and Asian residents have sparred over issues from Chinese-language signs on businesses to putting an Asian donor's name on a public library. On the other hand, in East Palo Alto, black and Latino residents have split along racial lines over board appointments and affordable-housing slots."

"In politics, there is always conflict," said Abrica, who originated from Mexico. But "if you establish one to one personal relationships, you can call on each other to help mediate."

The idea of bringing Asian Americans and Latinos together to train potential leaders for their respective communities originated from Hsing Kung, a retired high tech entrepre-

neur and community leader known as a "bridge builder" in Silicon Valley and a member of the APALI Advisory Council.

"It has taken one year to develop this idea (and) it is receiving enthusiastic responses," noted Margaret Abe Koga, who is running for Mountain View City Council.

"Nine years ago, APALI was formed to train high school/college students for leadership," she continued. "Now APALI is ready to go on to the next step of encouraging adults to be involved in decision-making levels of government and organizations."

APALI has also formed the APALI Roundtable, Senior Fellows Program, and a leadership network for elected officials and civic leaders.

Launched in March, there are now 50 Senior Fellows. Among the Japanese Americans in the group are: Jerry Hiura, Mike Honda, Richard Konda, Yoriko Kishimoto, Jeremy Nishihara, Randy Okamura, Art Takahara and Richard Tanaka.