

Awardees



UVSA of Southern California NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Union of Vietnamese Student Associations of Southern California (UVSA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan, community-based organization, was founded in 1982 as a mean for youths to organize socially and politically within the local community. Committed to cultural awareness, educating youths, and community service, the UVSA staff is composed of volunteers including UVSA alumni, young professionals, educators, and college and high school students.

At the beginning, UVSA was formed by a group of Vietnamese American youth who have successfully organized the Tet Festival to celebrate the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. Seeing the importance of preserving Vietnamese culture, tradition, and the idea of continuing the efforts to promote human rights and democracy abroad in Vietnam, they formed the UVSA as a place for youth passionate about the community and Vietnam.

From its founding time with a handful of Vietnamese American youth, UVSA now represents 13 colleges and universities and 20 high schools Vietnamese Student Associations. UVSA is one of the largest Vietnamese American youth organizations in the United States.

In 2003 UVSA co-hosted the 3rd International Vietnamese Youth Conference. It was one of the largest and most successful conferences for Vietnamese youth around the world attracting more than 600 attendees. In the effort of uniting Vietnamese youth, UVSA helped developed and established uNAVSA, the Union of North America Vietnamese Student Associations. In 2008, UVSA celebrated our 25th Anniversary, marking an important milestone for the organization.

UVSA continues the tradition of nurturing and education youth about the community and leadership through our annual camps and community activities such as Black April Commemoration, Vietnam Human Rights Night, charity car wash, bone marrow drive, and others.

This past year UVSA have successfully renewed our 5-year contract with the City of Garden Grove to be the host of the Tet Festival in the city. Each year, UVSA donates 50% of the net proceeds from the festival to non-profit organizations through its Community Assistance Fund program. Last year, UVSA gave out \$106,000 to 96

organizations and since 2001 UVSA has given back more than \$900,000 to non-profit organizations throughout Southern California.

Recently, UVSA was recognized as the best non-profit organization with the Golden Wave Award from Little Saigon Radio and Viet Tide Magazine. Each honoree was nominated by individuals in the community and was voted on by listeners of the radio calling into the station and also readers of the magazine.

Currently UVSA is working on strengthening its organization to make it a more effective tool to advocate for Vietnamese American youth interests. UVSA is working on expanding its leadership camps for high school and college students, continuing its effort to develop member schools, and engaging in discussion with the community to build a community center. UVSA also works closely with uNAVSA thru the conference, and UVSA of Northern California to develop a closer relationship.

Although UVSA is one of the oldest Vietnamese youth group, there have been numerous similar organizations in different part of the United States such as the UVSA of Northern California, UVSA Midwest, UVSA Ontario, Illinois Vietnamese Student Union, Union of North America Vietnamese Student Association, etc. The goal of UVSA is to strengthen its relationship with these counterparts and work together for the betterment of our community and our beloved Vietnam.

UVSA believes VANG is a valuable organization in highlighting the accomplishments of Vietnamese Americans in the United States and hopefully through VANG, UVSA can mobilize around issues that are affecting Vietnamese Americans. UVSA supports groups that seek to unite Vietnamese Americans on a national scale, such as VANG, uNAVSA, and VASCON, just to name a few. Building a national community starts at a local and regional level, but it definitely helps to have organizations that have broad reach to organize and rally collectively on a large scope.



VANG 2009™ GOLDEN TORCH AWARDS RECIPIENTS