

Appleseed This Week

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Jennifer Ching Honored

Congratulations to Jennifer Ching, Director of New York Appleseed, who was honored yesterday as one of the Outstanding 50 Asian Americans in Business.

Ching was nominated through her work with Aetna. NY Appleseed has partnered with the company to explore ways of expanding healthcare access for immigrant and low-wage workers.

Assembly Line Injustice

Appleseed Calls for Reform of Immigration Courts

Appleseed yesterday released a groundbreaking assessment of the immigration court system, presenting a slate of recommendations to redress problems at all stages of the adjudicatory process: from court proceedings and staffing, to representation, recordkeeping and even translation.

"If adopted, our recommendations will bring the immigration courts more into line with American notions of justice," said Appleseed Executive Director Betsy Cavendish. "Our aim is to ensure fairness and impartiality in a system that wields such life-altering power over the lives of immigrants."

A copy of the report, *Assembly Line Injustice*, and a summary of its key findings and recommendations can be accessed [here](#) or through [Appleseed's homepage](#).

Along with its affiliated Centers in Chicago and Texas, Appleseed spent 15 months examining the state of the immigration court system, with the generous pro bono support of *Latham & Watkins LLP* and *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*.

Based on more than 100 interviews with key practitioners in the system, as well as more than 100 hours of court observation by trained professionals, the report identifies problems encountered everyday by experts in the field. Chief among these are:

- too few immigration court judges and clerks;
- over-reliance on videoconferencing;
- inadequate access to court records;
- lack of effective, unbiased translation;
- difficulty in securing representation for immigrants; and
- a selection process for judges and Bureau of Immigration Appeals members that is often politicized and opaque.

The Outstanding 50 is presented by the Asian American Business Development Center. The theme for 2009 was "Developing Asian Talent and Leadership in the Global Marketplace."

Supporting its findings with both anecdotal and statistical evidence, *Assembly Line Injustice* offers comprehensive solutions, vetted by leading authorities, to these and other problems.

With yesterday's release, Appleseed now enters the crucial advocacy phase of the project, during which the organization will lobby vigorously for the adoption of its proposals. The ultimate goal is to ensure a fair trial and accurate ruling for every immigrant, in every jurisdiction.

Please check the Appleseed website over the coming months to track the progress of this important project.