

# **Toyota Employees Share What Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Means to Them and More**

May 31, 2024

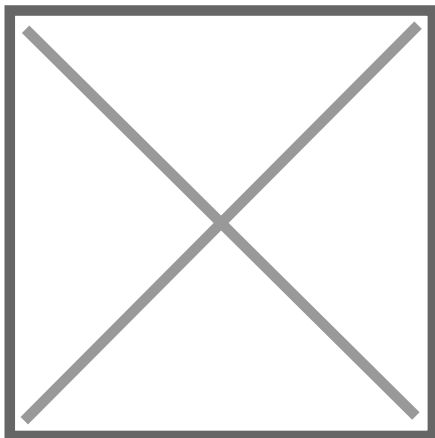
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For many Toyota employees who identify as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPIs), May is an important month. It's the time dedicated to honoring and celebrating the AANHPI community's countless contributions to society and its ongoing influence on American history and culture.

At Toyota, diversity and inclusion are paramount to cultivating a welcoming and satisfactory workplace. The company recently ranked fourth on Fair360's (formerly DiversityInc) Top 50 Companies for Diversity. It was also recognized as the fifth Top Company for Asian American Executives.

Three employees share what it's like to be a part of the Toyota Asian American Society in Alliance (TAASiA) business partnering group (BPG), and how they celebrated the month and more.



### **A Passion for Growth and Learning**

Nav Dhindsa, a production strategist for Electrification at Toyota Motor North America (TMNA), has always been fueled by the quest for knowledge and growth.

During his decade of working in production engineering, Dhindsa took on a variety of roles and challenges. From paint production for new models to new technology development and digital systems, his work spans an array of projects. Today, he works in production strategy, where he primarily focuses on electrified powertrains.

"I'm proud to work for Toyota for many reasons," Dhindsa says. "It starts with the company's unwavering emphasis on quality and reliability and a methodical approach to providing the best products for our customers through innovation and sustainability. This, combined with a culture focused on employee development and continuous learning, provides me with the tools I need to reach my full potential."

### **Cultivating Community**

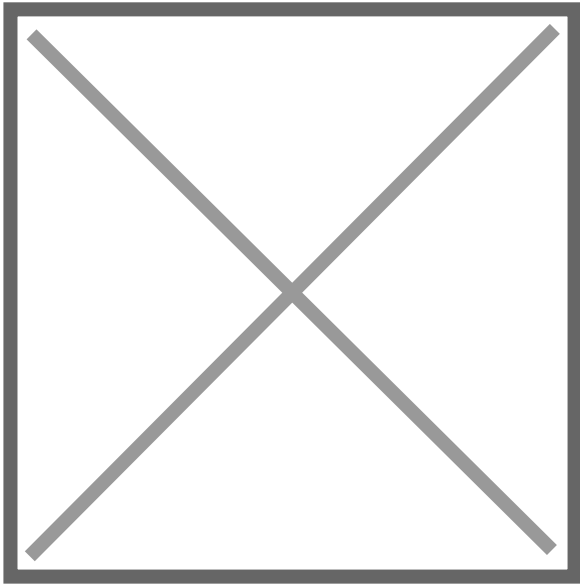
For Dhindsa, who grew up in a region of India known as Punjab (Land of Five Rivers), personal and corporate culture are inextricably intertwined. He helped cofound the Georgetown Chapter of TAASiA and working closely with the BPG eventually led to a leadership role.

Today, he serves on the board for the TAASiA North American Advisory Council.

"TAASiA's mission really resonated with me and my personal experiences growing up in many diverse environments," Dhindsa says. "My work with the group has helped me to recognize the intersections of identity and the importance of solidarity in the Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander community."

Dhindsa said the BPG has also given him a sense of belonging where he feels valued and connected with his peers.

“My favorite part of being a TAASiA member is the people,” he continued. “I’ve found a supportive community where I can openly share my perspectives, challenges, and triumphs. It’s incredibly empowering to know that I have a network of colleagues who empathize and champion with me on my journey.”



### **The Power of Respect**

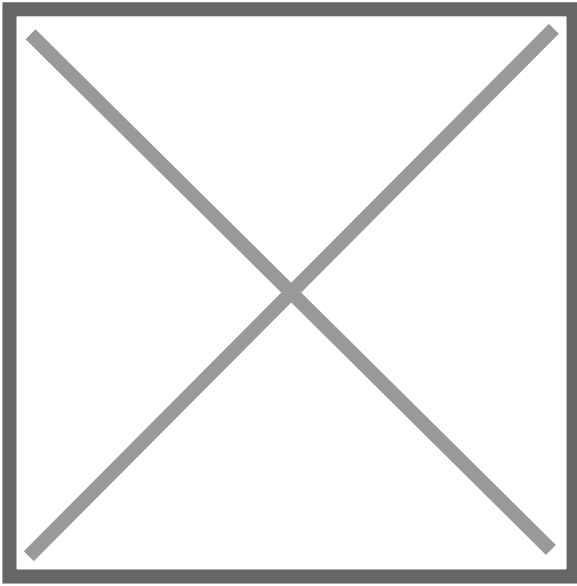
As a busy mom of three, Meyling Ly-Ortiz, an employment lawyer at Toyota, has her hands full, and that’s just how she likes it.

A problem-solver by nature, she enjoys being in the room where decisions are made. It’s Toyota’s culture and respect for people and growth-mindedness that keep her happy and satisfied in her day-to-day role.

“I witness firsthand how our leaders do their best to do the right thing, the respectful thing, for all involved, even while we need to move business forward,” says Ly-Ortiz.

Ly-Ortiz, who’s been with Toyota for eight years, has always been drawn to the company. The vehicles made an impression on her in more ways than one.

“I come from a family that always had a Toyota,” she says. “My thought was: If a company is this intentional about the quality of its vehicles, then that must translate to its culture.”



### **The Gift of Intentionality**

Being intentional is a driving force in Ly-Ortiz's life. When she's not imparting advice to a junior colleague, she's volunteering or working with a community nonprofit.

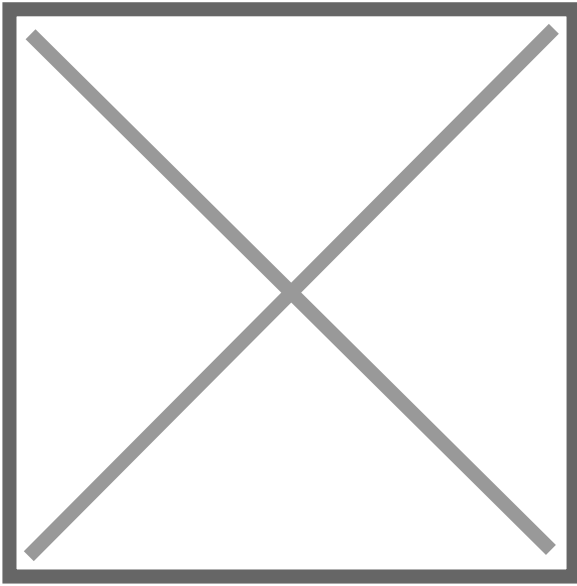
"I'm intentional about mentoring and relationship-building, so I often have one-on-ones throughout the month," she says.

Family time is also important to her. She credits Toyota for providing her with the opportunity to work in a supportive environment.

"I'm grateful for the flexibility our company and my leadership have entrusted in me so that I can show up as my best self at work and home," Ly-Ortiz says.

While she carves out time for others, she also prioritizes self-care and encourages others to do the same.

"Schedule days once a quarter for yourself when you work 'on' your life instead of 'in' it," she says. "These can look different to you, but for me, it's a PTO day, where after I've dropped the kids off, I do a challenging workout, get a massage to relax — and then do deep reflection work."



### **Celebrating the Culture**

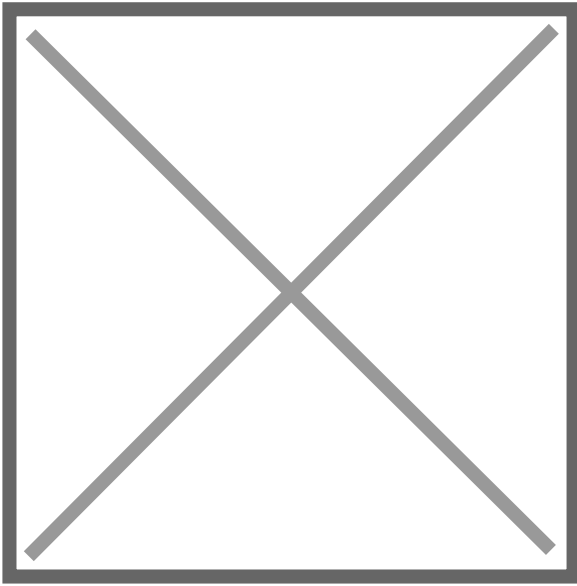
When Ly-Ortiz isn't mentoring, volunteering, or spending time with her family, she's busy working with various Toyota BPGs.

"I am a member of almost all the BPGs, because I strongly believe in allyship," she says. "But the BPGs where I've volunteered in some capacity in the past eight years are TAASiA, Women Influencing and Impacting Toyota (WIIT) and Spectrum (Toyota's LGBTQ+ BPG)."

When it comes to AANHPI Month, Ly-Ortiz takes great pride and hopes that it puts a spotlight on the group and its accomplishments.

"It means our community is given a chance to be seen as the valuable contributors to this country that we are. It's also a time to celebrate our cultural identities," she says of what the month means to her.

In celebration of AANHPI Month, Ly-Ortiz and her family watched movies and read books that highlight Asian culture — as well as supported local Asian restaurants and businesses.



### **Embracing Unexpected Paths**

Benjamin Baik has been part of TAASiA for several years. The long-time Toyota veteran, who is a portfolio sales manager with Mazda Financial Services' Private Label, says it's been an amazing experience to work with Toyota and the BPG.

"It's been rewarding to work with so many good employees," he says.

A second-generation Korean American, Baik didn't realize just how much of a positive impact working with the BPG would have on him.

"TAASiA West was a small BPG, but we've grown and created a strong group of leaders. Our group has been described as small but mighty," he says.

Like Dhindsa and Ly-Ortiz, Baik enjoys the people and connection that the BPG provides, like building friendships, learning about the different cultures within the Asian community and "enjoying good food along the way."

### **Savoring Togetherness**

Eating together and communing is something he also values when it comes to his family. "There are so many great traditions within my family," he says. "But my all-time favorite tradition is spending time with them while enjoying good food. We laugh and share stories about life. It's the best!"

To celebrate AANPHI Heritage Month, TAASiA West plans to spend a day at the Japanese American National Museum, as well as participate in an Asian speaker series.

"It's a great time to reflect on our values and emphasize the importance of each one of our different cultures," Baik says. "We have so many different backgrounds within the Asian community and there are so many lessons to learn from each one."