

# Asian American Student Advocacy Project Youth Leaders

2023-2024 Program Year



**Aisha Mowla**



**Aqida Rama**



**Ari Schaer**



**Ashwyn Lu-Heda**



**Brayden Wan**



**Casey Wu**



**Emily Ng**



**Esther Lin**



**Ethan Pereira**



**Evangelina Ago**



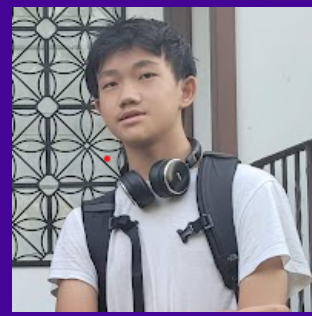
**Haixin Wu**



**Harpreet Singh**



**Isaiah Tsai**



**Jakoub Chen**



**Jiwon Lee**



**Jonas Wooh**



**Julianne Huang**



**Julie Wu**



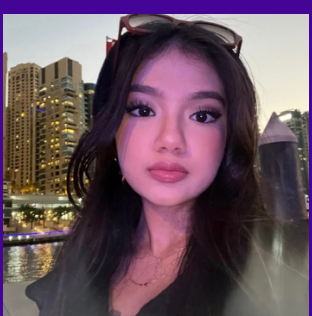
**Karen Kong**



**Kyae Sin Linn Lat**



**Kyle Lin**



**Leah Ali**



**Mikayla Hayes**



**Minesh Sumair**



**Niki Wang**



**Olivia Kim**



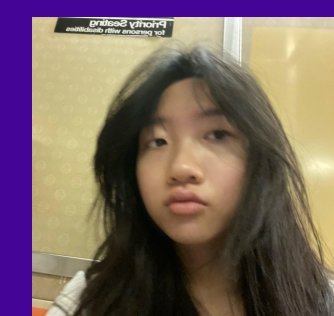
**Olivia Mok**



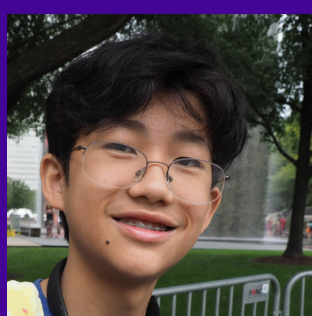
**Reona Alam**



**Ryan Kim**



**Sabrina Zheng**



**Seaver Chen**



**Xier Lin**



**Zachary Wang**



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### **Aisha Mowla (she/her)**

I joined ASAP because of my experience at the AAPI youth-led conference and my interest in social justice work. In addition to this, I thought it was a great place to grow my leadership skills and my love for social justice. A space like ASAP is important to me because one of my core values is community. To me, programs like ASAP are crucial because it allows youth to be a safe space to explore topics through a social justice lens. Another reason is that having a space like ASAP where we are able to contribute to meaningful changes is important.



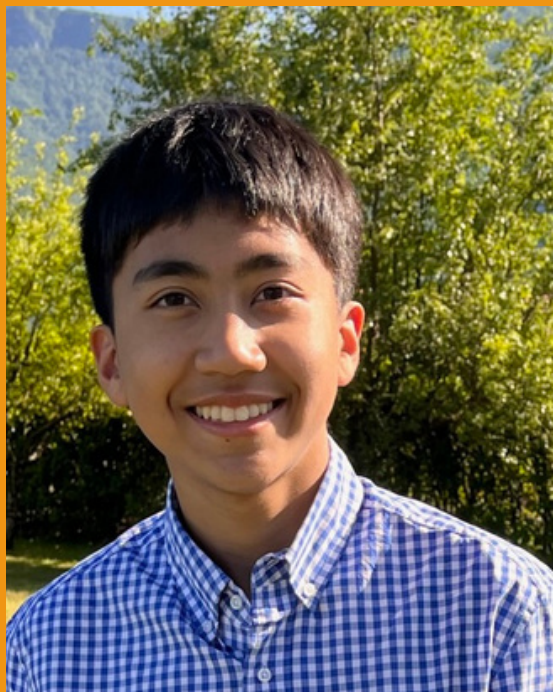
### **Aqida Rama (she/her)**

I rejoined ASAP because it has been an enriching experience to explore my AAPI identity. ASAP has provided a supportive environment where I felt comfortable expressing my ideas and challenging myself. I am committed to expanding my knowledge about our communities and delving into the profound implications of policy. ASAP has provided me a valuable platform for connecting with other AAPI youth, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. My ultimate goal is to be a catalyst for positive change, ensuring that future generations of AAPI individuals can explore their identities and cultivate a strong sense of belonging within their communities.



### **Ari Schaer (he/him)**

I joined ASAP as I really enjoyed the community that I felt participating in the youth led conference. I would love to work on creating positive changes for the AAPI community, especially students, through policy advocacy. I also am committed to connecting more with the AAPI community to strengthen my connection with my identity, and in a space like ASAP that I feel safe and not judged. Through ASAP, I hope to gain more experience working with others, and help create and cultivate a safe space for AAPI youth.



### **Ashwyn Lu-Heda (he/him)**

I wanted to join ASAP because I wanted to get more involved in the community. I learned a lot in the AAPI-LEAD Youth Conference. The conference made me want to contribute to the community. I hope to learn more about what I can do for the AAPI community in terms of creating positive changes. Through different opportunities that ASAP provides, I hope to build a deeper sense of connection with the AAPI community. Space like ASAP is important because ASAP provides the safe space for me to connect with others.



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### Brayden Wan (he/him)

The reason I returned to ASAP this year was because I want to continue to advocate for our community. I have learned more about different issues in the AAPI community such as mental health. In ASAP this year I hope to improve my public speaking skills by attending more event and improving on storytelling. Before I joined ASAP I never had the chance to explore these topics but now in ASAP I could, and that helped me grow as a person



### Casey Wu (he/him)

I decided to join ASAP because I want to learn more about policy advocacy and see how youth like me could take action toward social justice. During the summer conferences ASAP held, I was excited to be in a place where topics and conversations on the Asian-American experience were being discussed. I hope to learn in ASAP how to be a stronger leader and advocate in my community. My goal is also to develop a stronger voice that initiates change. Spaces like ASAP are important to me because they never really existed in my childhood, so having a place where being AAPI is the focus helps me understand my identity better.



### Emily Ng (she/her)

I returned to ASAP because I really enjoyed being able to connect with fellow high school students over the AAPI community. I also want to continue to improve my facilitation and leadership skills. Through ASAP, I hope to continue exploring my identity as an AAPI youth and to understand more about what it truly means to be AAPI. A space like ASAP is really important because it allows me to be comfortable with who I am, while also allowing me to step out of my comfort zone and grow as an individual. ASAP has helped me improve as a leader, team player, advocate, facilitator, and more, guiding youth, like myself, to greater and more meaningful development.



### Esther Lin (she/her)

I want to return to ASAP because I find it empowering to be in a space where there are people facing similar problems and experiences as me. Being in this space has made me more comfortable about who I am, and encourage me to learn more about the community. I hope that this year in ASAP I'm able to participate in more events. A space like ASAP is important to me because it's a space we can share our experiences while being heard as well. It's a space where I grew as a person, whether it's being a better speaker or a more informed advocate.



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### Ethan Pereira (he/him)

Through the AAPI-LEAD Youth conference, I learned things about the AAPI community are missing in our school curriculum. Learning about the missing pieces furthered my interest in learning about policy advocacy. In ASAP, I am part of the Community Engagement team and I hope to bring different perspectives on the issues that we are going to discuss. By being in ASAP, I would like to contribute to building meaningful and lasting changes for the AAPI community.



### Evangelina Ago

I joined ASAP because there is a lack of AAPI youth in my school and I thought that ASAP would be an opportunity for me to find that sense of AAPI community. I would like to learn more about my community as I feel like ASAP addresses a lot of topics that aren't highlighted enough in schools. In ASAP I hope to learn more about AAPI youth needs and how to address and support their needs. In ASAP, I want to build my connection to my AAPI heritage and I would like to create effective and meaningful changes through my campaign.



### Haixin Wu 吴海鑫 (he/him)

As a member of the AAPI community, I am always looking for ways to contribute back to my community and to have a role in change making. Also, I want to help educate more people about the AAPI community for them to understand us. I joined ASAP in the hopes of learning more about the AAPI community, and its history and the issues that we face as AAPIs. A space like ASAP is important to me because it allows me to share my experience and opinions on the difficulties that AAPI people face daily. It is critical that ASAP allow me to express my views and to advocate for our community.



### Harpreet Singh ਹਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ (he/him)

I joined ASAP as a means to find inspiration for my personal character. Prior to ASAP, I found myself to be indolent and not being confident. As a result, I joined ASAP because I am able to connect with like-minded youth and so it gives me the opportunity to understand how to break through my barriers. ASAP allows me to push myself and further engage with my environment in a meaningful way. Unlike school, ASAP gives priority to understand the people around you. You are given the opportunity to accumulate valuable ideas that are relatable. The space ASAP creates promotes inclusivity and a safe space where we can be ourselves.



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### Isaiah Tsai (he/him)

I joined ASAP because I wanted to fight against AAPI issues with youth who, like me, are willing and ready to work towards that goal. I think that it's really powerful to be in a room where everyone looks like you and understands the AAPI side of the story. At ASAP I hope to be able to grow as an AAPI advocate and equip myself with the knowledge and ability to educate others about the AAPI experience and why it's important. I'm very grateful to be a part of ASAP because it's such a different kind of environment full of motivated people.



### Jakoub Chen (he/him)

I returned to ASAP to continue learning more about my AAPI Identity and to continue my work with the Anti-Bullying and harassment campaign. Additionally, I'm also looking to improve with my social and public speaking skills. A space like ASAP is important to me because my school doesn't have a big AAPI population and I want to be surrounded by people who share the similar background, this would help me deepen my connection with my community. In a space like ASAP, I get to explore different topics, step out of my comfort zone and further develop my leadership skills.



### Jiwon Lee (she/her)

I joined ASAP with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of the AAPI community and sharing my experiences as a young immigrant from South Korea. In my school, we rarely discuss AAPI issues. So I joined ASAP to help me better understand my community. I believe ASAP is the place where I feel safe to share my experiences and learn skills to become a leader. In ASAP, I am looking forward to engage in different discussions and participate in different events to improve my confidence and leadership skills while connecting with peers who share similar experiences.



### Jonas Wooh (he/him)

I joined ASAP because I really wanted to learn more about how I could support and advocate for more people like me. ASAP is an important place to me because I feel like this community is so empowering. ASAP educates me, and resonates with me. Being in a room full of people who are like-minded, and supportive is really affirming. Growing up in places and schools, I always wished there could be more people who could advocate for me or be my ally. Now I want to be that ally and advocate for others. ASAP is definitely the right place for me to learn how to do that.



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### Julianne Huang (she/her)

I returned to ASAP for my fourth year because the program has brought me out to be more perceptive, open-minded, literate, and confident. The growth I see and feel was guided by the work I've done in ASAP. ASAP has been a space where I've felt a sense of belonging without being too comfortable. While feeling like I have a community, I'm also always being challenged, whether it's by the coordinators, my peers, or even myself. Additionally, a place like ASAP gives us a chance and space to add our voices to policymaking to create positive changes.



### Julie Wu (she/her)

I returned to ASAP because I wanted to continue my growth journey. Last year, I was also able to improve my leadership and collaboration skills and foster my advocacy skills. A space like ASAP is important to me because it allows me to learn the value of leadership but also foster strong connections with my peers. I often find it difficult to find a community where I feel safe and comfortable sharing our experiences but also feel encouraged to push myself outside of my comfort zone, however ASAP is the space for me. ASAP does not only nurture a sense of community but also a space for self growth and continuous learning.



### Karen Kong (she/her)

I want to return to ASAP because I want to continue building a strong community with the AAPI community and creating positive changes. During my time in ASAP, I have been provided with the necessary tools, knowledge, skills, and support to deepen my connection with my AAPI identity, build a support system of passionate peers, and voice my opinions to decision makers. ASAP provided me with a space where I felt seen and heard when I shared my stories and that made me feel like my voice matters, something I rarely experienced prior to ASAP. And those moments of speaking up made me feel empowered as an AAPI youth.



### Kyae Sin Linn Lat ကြယ်စင်လင်းလက်

During the 2023 AAPI-LEAD Conference, I learned a lot more about the issues in our community. Realizing that advocacy has the most significant impact on our society, I want to be a part of ASAP. ASAP has provided me with a space to learn grow and raise awareness of the issues in the AAPI community, and work with like-minded peers. Due to my lack of fluency in English., I am not confident in sharing my thoughts. In ASAP, I hope to strengthen my communication and leadership skills.



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### **Kyle Lin (he/him)**

I returned to ASAP because of the impact it has put upon me this past year. I've learned to grow a stronger understanding about my community and how I can create change. I was provided with many character building opportunities like facilitating and public speaking. ASAP fosters heavily about inclusivity and the need to create change. A space like ASAP is extremely important to me because it plays a big role in change within our community. It reminds the AAPI diaspora that we are not forgotten and we have the power. A place like ASAP is imperative to allow our voices to be heard and to foster a growing space for all youth.



### **Leah Ali (she/her)**

I decided to join ASAP because of ASAP's commitment to education on topics often missing from school curriculums, and its emphasis on direct-action initiatives. ASAP offers a safe and inclusive space to connect with and inspire other AAPI youth. I'm eager to contribute to these efforts and make a positive impact within the AAPI community. In ASAP, I hope to build upon my advocacy skills, gain new perspectives, and amplify issues within the AAPI community and beyond. I aspire to actively participate in reshaping the narrative surrounding our community, and help foster a more equitable society for all.



### **Mikayla Hayes (she/her)**

I returned to ASAP this year because I felt that I learned so much last year in ASAP. My communication skills and confidence grew and I was able to achieve many things that I was very proud of. This year in ASAP I hope that I can educate myself more on changes we can make to the school system. ASAP is an important space for me because it gives me an outlet to share my ideas around hard topics without fears. It is an environment where everyone is welcome and safe, it allows for youth to be more involved in their communities.



### **Minesh Sumair (he/him)**

I joined ASAP with the goal of contributing to my community to educate people on topics that aren't spoken of enough in the AAPI community. By creating a safe space to foster these conversations, I would be contributing and building my community to be stronger. A space like ASAP allows me to speak with other like-minded teenagers. Having these discussions in ASAP is comforting and also makes me feel like my experiences provide a perspective that is worth listening to. To me, it isn't just our identity that should unite us, but also our experiences and visions for the community we are a part of.



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### **Niki Wang (she/they)**

I wanted to join ASAP because there are rarely spaces dedicated for AAPI students on what it means to be an Asian American. Being in ASAP means I will be able to have the opportunity to transform my identity into leadership and advocacy will clarify my goals and values as I go on to college. At ASAP, I hope to work with like-minded peers. I am excited to do work on community outreach and facilitating workshops to empower other AAPI youth to join this initiative. I also hope to learn how to use my voice as a tool in the path towards solidarity and furthering my own connection to my identity in a way that isn't stereotyped, but in a way that's empowering.



### **Olivia Kim (she/her)**

I returned to ASAP because I wanted to continue my journey in learning about my AAPI identity and the AAPI community. When I joined ASAP last year, I wanted to get a better grasp of how I fit into the AAPI community. I was able to do that. Because of this, I returned to ASAP to continue advocating for my community. Not enough places like ASAP exist. Having spaces that are youth-led, open, honest, and focused on connecting AAPIs are important to feel a sense of belonging, and also share your stories and experiences with others who want to make a difference like you. ASAP creates a safe space to learn about ourselves and others.



### **Olivia Mok (Any pronoun)**

I decided to join ASAP because I wanted to contribute to an initiative that seeks to promote inclusivity through advocacy. ASAP creates a unique sense of community that is valuable to me. It allows us to be creative, voice our thoughts, and become more appreciative of ourselves and our community. Through ASAP, I want to create spaces for AAPI youth where they can feel they belong. ASAP is an important space to me because I am able to be my authentic self and it is that kind of space that I hope will help me better understand my identity and community.



### **Reona Alam (she/her)**

When I learned about ASAP's mission in bringing in the AAPI youth's ideas and their backgrounds and experiences into policy making across the city; I decided to join ASAP in uplifting AAPI youth voices. From AAPI-LEAD conference, I gained a sense of community as well as knowledge from learning about the different experiences from others. A space like ASAP is important to me because it gives me the opportunity to learn from other AAPI youth. This allows me to be more educated about the AAPI community. I also believe that spaces such as ASAP is important in training future leaders.



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### Ryan Kim (he/him)

I joined ASAP to learn more about what AAPI youth can do in response to the different issues in the AAPI community. I joined ASAP to learn what steps I could take to educate myself and spread awareness to others. ASAP is an important space to me because apart from being part of a network of communication with other AAPI leaders, I am able to voice my own opinion amongst like-minded youth. This is especially valuable in terms of facilitating change. ASAP creates a space where a group of motivated individuals can all contribute to the betterment of society.



### Sabrina Zheng (she/her)

Prior to ASAP, I did not understand what being AAPI meant to me, and lacked the confidence to take on leadership roles. Now, I believe I have gotten more comfortable taking on leadership roles. I returned to ASAP this year because I want to continue my path of learning and growing. ASAP is an important space for me because people from different places come together in one place to connect with each other, meeting new people also gives me new perspectives. ASAP allows me to turn my attention toward something else that is not about academics.



### Seaver Chen (he/him)

One of the reason why I decided to join ASAP was to connect with other AAPI youths. ASAP felt like a good opportunity to meet other AAPI youth and learn about their backgrounds and experiences. Another reason was for the campaign I wanted to work on: Anti-Bullying and Harassment. This topic is very relevant to my life in school, and through this campaign to learn what AAPI youth like me could do to make schools a more comfortable environment. The space that ASAP provides is important to me for meeting other AAPI youths in my community. The environment allows everyone to share and learn about each other which I feel is very valuable.



### Xier Lin (she/her)

I returned to ASAP to continue the work that we have done. It has been a great learning experience and I also got to work on my presentation skills and the ability to talk in larger group settings. I hope to continue to work on my public skills through ASAP. I would also like to learn more about other people's stories and experiences, and what we can do as a community toward creating positive changes for everyone. A space like ASAP is important to me because it is a space where I can develop my leadership skills that are grounded in the community.



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### Zachary Wang

I joined ASAP in hopes to learn more about my AAPI identity. I didn't grow up knowing a lot about what this mean for me. I also wish to help educate members of the community on matters involving them and finding a solution. I hope to improve my leadershi skills. ASAP is important to me as it's filled with people care about the community and want to bring changes. I hope I can contribute to building a community that is inclusive and safe for everyone to thrive.



In 2004, CACF started the Asian American Student Advocacy Project (ASAP), a youth leadership program for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth from across New York City to learn about their AAPI identity, their community and history, and the importance of youth voice in policymaking to address inequities in our public school system.

ASAP educates, trains, and equips its Youth Leaders to be self-aware and informed advocates for their communities. ASAP seeks to build a community of AAPI youth whose voices are heard and incorporated, and with the collective power to create positive change, particularly in education.

This year, ASAP is working on three campaigns, which are mental health, language access, and anti-bullying and harassment.

- **Mental health campaign**
  - aims to identify mental health needs and challenges faced by AAPI youth in NYC public high schools and to advocate for cultural humility and culturally-responsive mental health services in schools.
- **Language access campaign**
  - aims to identify the needs and challenges faced by AAPI English Language Learners in the NYC public school system and to advocate for a better and more equitable school environment where all students can feel seen, supported, and welcomed.
- **Anti-bullying and harassment campaign**
  - aims to identify safety-related challenges faced by AAPI students in NYC public high schools and the gaps in how school administrations handle bullying and harassment incidents and to advocate for effective policy-based solutions.

For more information, please contact Ada Lin at [alin2@cacf.org](mailto:alin2@cacf.org)



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