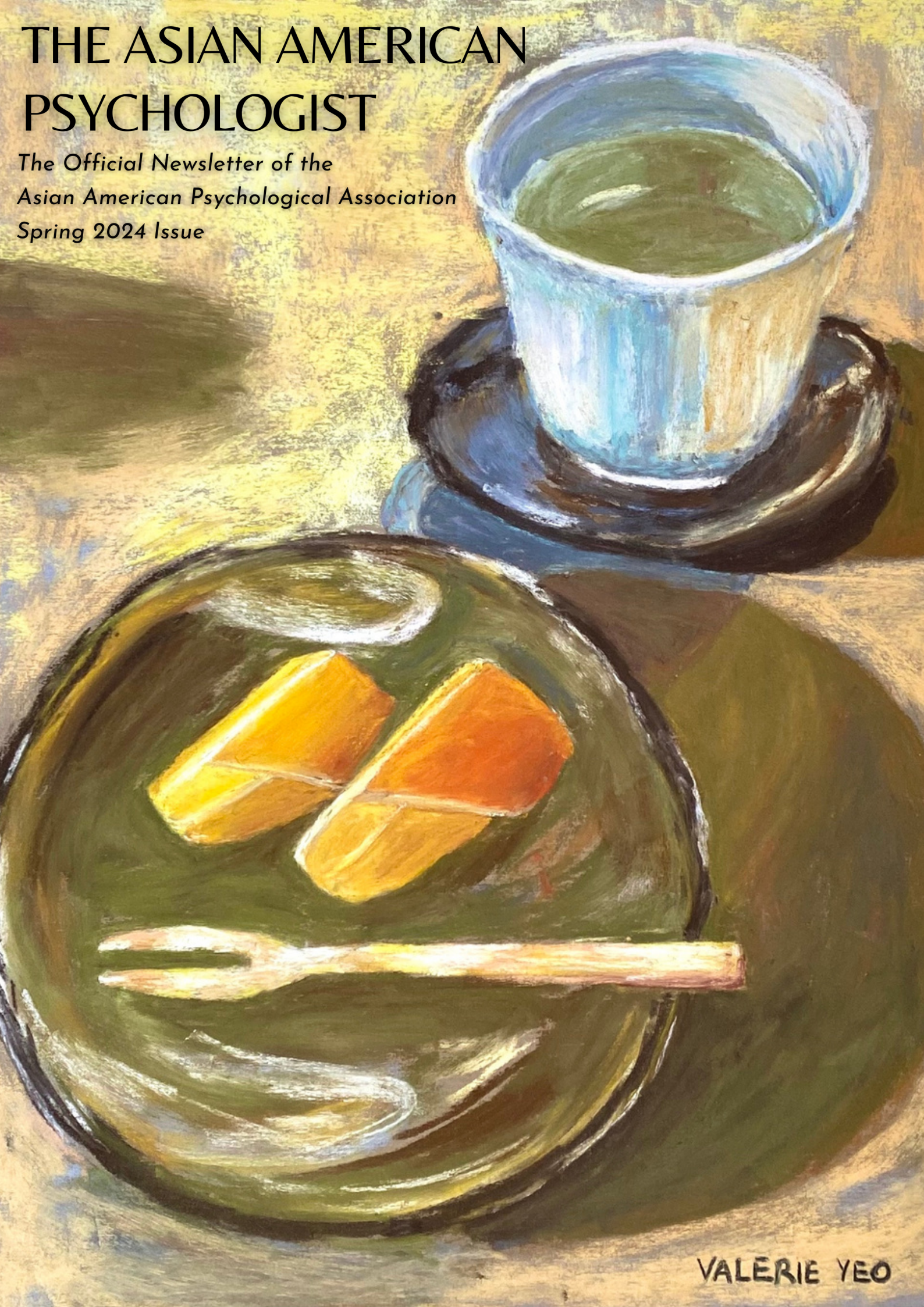


# THE ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

*The Official Newsletter of the  
Asian American Psychological Association  
Spring 2024 Issue*



VALERIE YEO

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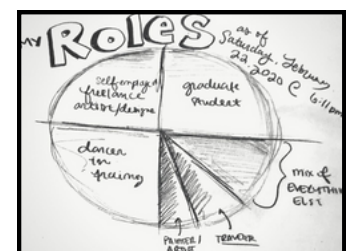
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Spring 2024

## THE ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this issue are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the AAPA or the newsletter editorial leadership team.*

The Asian American Psychologist is the official newsletter of the Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) and is published three times annually. The newsletter serves to share perspectives of members and inform the AAPA community of relevant news and events.

For submissions and questions, please email [newsletter@aapaonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aapaonline.org).

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# President & Vice President's Message

by Christine Catipon, PsyD & Donna Demanarig, PhD



Kumusta! My name is **Christine Catipon** (she/they/siya), and I am a queer female Filipinx American clinical psychologist residing in the Bay Area and working at Stanford University Counseling and Psychological Services. I am excited and honored to serve alongside Dr. Demanarig not only as part of the first Filipinx duo serving as president and vice president of AAPA, but also as a proud member of the Divisions on Filipinx Americans (DoFA), South East Asian Americans (DoSEAA), Practice (DoP), Women

(DoW), and LGBTQQ+. I never imagined myself in this position or in this community when I first started graduate school, as I had only learned about AAPA after going through graduate school and the first three years of licensure feeling alone and unseen in all my identities. That all changed when the Division on Filipinx Americans (DoFA) was founded and I joined the inaugural executive committee as its mentorship chair, as I wanted to be the support for others that I never received in graduate school. And now, I hope to serve this organization to the best of my ability, as I am so grateful for all that I have received by being part of AAPA: community, familial relationships (karaoke, arguments, and all), wisdom from those who have paved the road for us, and a supportive network that understands the blessings and challenges that come from being a part of this community, especially in the last 50+ years since AAPA was founded.

My leadership style is one that has been fostered from past roles such as co-captain of my high school cheerleading pep flag squad, founding president of the Filipino alumni chapter at my university alma mater, co-chair of DoFA for two terms, co-founder of the Orange County/Inland Empire chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS), and AAPA vice president for the past two years. I have a transformative leadership style which emphasizes communication, respect, radical healing, curiosity, and fun, and I believe these values will help us get AAPA to the next 50 years and beyond. We look forward to being of service as we continue to strive for social justice, destigmatize mental health, and share our wisdom and knowledge with one another in service to the healing and upliftment of our community.

I am **Donna Demanarig**, an ethnically Filipinx American with both Indigenous (Bagóbo Tagabawa and Dyangan tribe in Mindanao, Philippines) and colonizer (Spain) ancestries. When I was 5 years old, my family migrated to Majuro, Marshall Islands, where I spent the majority of my childhood. Much like in many immigrant stories, my parents sought to provide my brother and me with a more stimulating and challenging educational environment, which then led us to settle in the mainland—Massachusetts.



As I continue to witness the pain and suffering of my people and relatives from other marginalized and minoritized communities because of systemic oppression and white supremacy, I am intentional in using this pain and anger to be an accomplice in improving our communities through my scholarship, teaching, mentorship, and service work.

In my leadership journey, I have gleaned invaluable insights on effective leadership from mentors, colleagues, and students alike. To me, leadership embodies the art of inspiring and empowering others to achieve their fullest potential and fostering an environment that encourages collaboration, growth, and shared success. As a Brown womyn, I recognize the critical importance of representation in leadership roles. Embracing cultural humility, I strive to cultivate an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are not only acknowledged but celebrated. I hope to embody this in my tenure as your vice president.

## Our Vision for AAPA

As we considered our own personal histories and experiences within AAPA, the current world events we are experiencing, and the ever-evolving landscape of AAPA, we identified the following initiatives as our goals for our term.

**Community** - We aim to bring our community back together with programming and events that are both informational and aspirational in fulfilling the needs of AAPA members. The largest demonstration of this will be the return of our annual in-person convention this year in Atlanta, GA, but we hope that this will be the start of many more events centered around forming relationships, mentorships, and support networks with one another.

**Connection** - We are aware of the challenges that AAPA (and the world) has faced in creating connection with others following the pandemic, yet even prior to that world event, AAPA experienced exponential growth in its numbers, which did not allow for ideal conditions to connect the many generations within AAPA. Most of our members identify as students and early-career psychologists, and it has been a challenge to keep our mid-career, late-career, and elders integrated and involved in AAPA. We have plans for a podcast, "Between Two Palms," that will allow for intergenerational dialogues and opportunities to learn from one another, and we are also in talks for creating visual media that will help destigmatize mental health in our community and help us feel more connected to our community at large.

**Social Justice and Healing** - Our AANHPI community has experienced significant pain and loss in the last few years, including the rise of anti-Asian hate; blame for the COVID pandemic; the shootings in Atlanta, Indianapolis, Half Moon Bay, and Monterey Park; the wildfires in Lahaina, Hawaii; and countless other tragedies that did not make the news. Our community also has been divided since the events of October 7, 2023 in the Gaza Strip. We pledge to continue the fight for social justice while offering a safe space to grieve and heal with our community, and we support actions that are exemplified by our mission statement: Advance the mental health and well-being of Asian American communities through research, professional practice, education, and policy.

We hope that this newsletter feature tells you a little more about us, and we would like to know you all as well. Please reach out to us with any questions, ideas, feedback, or comments about how we can support you and the mission of AAPA. We can be reached by email at [president@aapaonline.org](mailto:president@aapaonline.org) and [vp@aapaonline.org](mailto:vp@aapaonline.org).



SPRING 2024

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF



Greetings! We are [Caitlyn Suen](#) and [Sasha Mieko Vasilou](#). We are honored to be the co-editors-in-chief of *The Asian American Psychologist* from 2024-2026. We recognize the importance of this newsletter to the AAPA membership and wish to find ways to amplify underrepresented voices through this platform. In following the incredible work of [Lauren Yang](#) and [Sophie Nguyen](#), we hope to find ways to encourage reflective dialogue, resource sharing, and celebration within the newsletter.

With the start of our term, we anticipate developing our skills as we absorb the invaluable wisdom of the editors before us. It has been a wonderful experience to work with such a diligent, passionate, and creative team. The newsletter would not exist without them. You can learn more about our talented team in the Newsletter Team Biographies section of this issue. We welcome you to reach out to team members whose passions align with your own, and we are always eager to collaborate with you on pieces you'd like to see in future issues.

Caitlyn, a Chinese Malaysian, was raised in a vibrant and diverse cultural environment. Growing up, she embraced a multitude of Asian cultures, celebrating Chinese Lunar New Year, breaking fast with her Muslim friends and family during Ramadan, and partaking in Holi celebrations with the Asian Indian community. Caitlyn deeply appreciates the rich diversity of Asian cultures and understands the profound importance of cultural heritage and the power it holds in shaping identities and fostering a sense of belonging. She hopes to establish a more supportive and inclusive environment where all AAPA members can freely share their unique cultural traditions, experiences, and stories. [Sara Ahmed](#) has shared stimulating stories on *Palestinian liberation* in this spring newsletter. Meanwhile [Dr. Maha See](#)'s insightful piece sheds valuable light on Myanmar's trauma, contributing to our understanding of the country's mental health conditions.

Numerous beautiful and wonderful articles penned by our talented AAPA members grace the newsletter pages, reflecting the diverse voices and perspectives within our communities. These writings are not just a testament to the varied experiences of our members but also as a reminder of our unique role as therapists, to support our communities during times of crisis, contribute to their healing and resilience, and advocate for accessible and culturally responsive mental health resources, raise awareness about cultural sensitivity, and work towards creating a more compassionate, inclusive, and equitable society for all.

Sasha currently is in the midst of a major life transition, having recently graduated with a master's in clinical mental health counseling from Northwestern University. February proved to be a very busy month for Sasha. She engaged in co-constructing a trauma-informed event for *intergenerational conversations* for her Japanese American community. This occurred in tandem with the Day of Remembrance, a nationally recognized day for reflecting on the impacts of WWII-era incarceration of Japanese Americans. Conducting semi-formal intergenerational conversations was new for the Chicagoland Japanese American community and was characterized by the tension, anxiety, and ambiguity of pursuing any novel experience. The event proved to be a welcome opportunity for community members to feel both grief and solidarity, recognizing the shared pain and the shared tools of resilience. Thoughts of the ongoing genocides and mass incarceration in other parts of the world were on all our minds as we reckoned with generations of pain, distress, and trauma in our small community.

This Spring issue in many ways reflects this as it will feature stories of underrecognized trauma and reflections on grief. It will also include resources and mindfulness tools to help us to both serve clients and support ourselves in these heartbreaking times. With the 2024 Year of the Dragon promising change, challenges, and opportunities, we hope to find new ways to breathe hope into trying times. It is the year of transformation! 🐉

Recognizing the power of art in healing and the need for collective healing both locally and globally, we hope to find ways to imbue more art into the newsletter. We welcome submissions of literary pieces like poetry and fiction as well as visual art. We also aim to make the newsletter creation process as seamless and sustainable as possible, so we will be recruiting a new co-editor-in-chief to start in Spring 2025 so that each new editor can learn alongside a veteran. If you have interest or questions about the newsletter submissions process, have an idea for a piece, want to submit artwork, or would like to join as an editor-in-chief, feel free to reach us at [newsletter@aapaonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aapaonline.org).

Lastly, on behalf of AAPA, Caitlyn and Sasha extend heartfelt wishes to all Muslim friends for a serene and spiritually fulfilling Ramadan and joyous Eid al-Fitr in this April 2024. May this season be a source of joy, reflection, and connection within our diverse AAPA community.

With gratitude,  
Sasha and Caitlyn



# FINANCE OFFICERS' REPORT

## Spring Quarter 2024

AAPA's Co-Finance Officers (FOs) Cat Bitney, Amanda Breen, Flora Surjadi, and Soyeong Kim are happy to report that AAPA's bank accounts are in good standing. Our total combined balance from E\*trade, Chase, and PayPal is **\$644,473.66** as of February 24, 2024. Subtracting fiscal agent accounts and AAPA Division balances, AAPA's main account has **\$489,545.86** in working capital.

We are happy to share the following important updates with the AAPA membership:

**Welcoming Soyeong Kim!** We are thrilled to welcome Soyeong to the FO team! Soyeong will be working with Flora and our newly hired executive assistant, Melissa Aguirre, to keep AAPA in good financial health.

**Saying Goodbye.** Amanda and Cat will orient Soyeong and Melissa to their new roles and will both be rolling off after that. We have both loved serving AAPA and know that the finance team is strong and capable going forward! You will be able to find them on the Queer Division EC and perhaps other AAPA roles in the future!

**2024 Budget.** We have worked with the presidential trio to craft a 2024 budget. We will present it to the EC at the next meeting for approval.

**Disbursement of Dues.** We disbursed 2023 division dues to all the divisions. Division Chairs and FOs will see this reflected in their division's ledger.

**Taxes.** Cat worked with our accountant and AAPA's 2022 taxes were submitted! We will file for an extension on our 2023 taxes.

**Investing.** We are currently in the process of researching a Chase CD to put AAPA's savings into. We anticipate that this move could yield AAPA approximately \$10,000 over the life of the CD (the 9-month CD is looking like our best option right now with an APY of 4.75%).

# Hello AAPA Members!

## Updates from the Membership Team

We would like to congratulate our new membership co-chairs, [Tania Chowdhury](#) and [Lisa Liu](#)!

We have not had consistent membership co-chairs over the past year and a half, and thank you all for your patience during that time with any membership-related issues. If you have any membership-related issues that you haven't received support for, please email us again at [membership@aapaonline.org](mailto:membership@aapaonline.org), so we can provide the needed support.

### Membership Reminders:

- As an AAPA member, you can edit your membership account by logging into your account on [aapaonline.org](http://aapaonline.org). If you cannot remember your password, there is an option to reset it. You can join our wonderful AAPA divisions and update your email address for the listservs through your online account.
- Your AAPA membership lasts for a year from the date you signed up and will automatically be renewed after the year is complete. Please email us if you would like to opt out of having your membership automatically renewed.

Currently, AAPA has a total membership count of **1,514** members. Student members continue to comprise the majority of our membership. See the table below for a breakdown of our membership-by-membership category.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding AAPA membership, please do not hesitate to contact our membership team.

Thank you for your continued support of AAPA! We are thankful for this community.

Membership Category	# of Members
Student	860
Professional	643
Retiree/Emeritus	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1514</b>

**Best wishes,**

AAPA Membership Team



*Are you interested in receiving advice, guidance, and support from AAPA mentors, while simultaneously nurturing a deeper sense of community within our organization? If so . . .*

## The Division on Students invites you to participate in the ***Mentorship Office Hours Program***

The Division on Students (DoS) is thrilled to announce the return of the Mentorship Office Hours program! This initiative presents an invaluable opportunity for both mentors and mentees.

The program will run from **June to September 2024** and provide a platform for mentors and mentees to convene, whether in-person or virtually, based on the preferences of the mentor. The program also aims to facilitate meaningful conversations and connections across different career stages, time zones, and interests. For those interested in serving as mentors, please click the link below to complete the sign-up Google Form. We welcome folks to serve as mentors and to participate as mentees as well.

**CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO SIGN-UP NOW USING THE  
2024 DoS AAPA Mentorship Office Hours Interest Form**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdiRsV-YlDuC81nWkliOH7xl8McBJKzl8768tQ4REv3LOfEnw/viewform>

### **AAPA DoS Mentorship Team**

Julia Zhong  
Molly Sawdy  
Amal Soomro

# EC RETREAT

## Gathering In Albuquerque: The AAPA Leadership Retreat

By Sue H. Kim, PhD

What better way to bond with your fellow leaders than to get trapped in an expert-level escape room with them? From January 19-21, fourteen of AAPA's Executive Committee members met in Albuquerque, New Mexico to engage in team-building and prepare for the upcoming year's direction and activities. Three members of the EC were able to join virtually but missed out on experiencing the altitude in NM where "one drink DOES equal three..." (per a retreat attendee who will remain unnamed).

Dr. Christine Catipon, AAPA's president, shared that one of the highlights of the retreat was "how quickly EC members connected with one another." And since division chairs were not able to be included in this retreat (which was hastily planned to address some time-sensitive issues), the plan is to include them in a virtual retreat sometime in the spring.

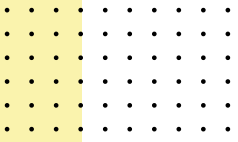
“

We also hope to have a bonding activity with the Division EC members during the Convention in Atlanta this year - Dr. Catipon.

”



AAPA Leadership Retreat attendees: front row L to R: Kavita Atwal (Secretary/Historian), Amanda Breen (Finance Officer), Amy Kobus (Professional, Board of Directors), Donna Demanarig (VP), Topaz Yu (Student, Board of Directors), Koko Nishi (Co-chair for AAPA Leadership Fellow), June Kim (current editor of AAJP); second row L to R: Flora Srujadi (Finance Officer), Christine Catipon (President), Cat Bitney (Finance Officer), Sasha Miekko Vasilou (Newsletter Co-editor), Jaya Bhojwani (AAPA Leadership Fellow), Adeleine Conanan (AAPA Leadership Fellow); Top of pyramid: Michi Fu (APA COR Rep).



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Being in person “was energizing and a great way to build trust and community,” noted Dr. Donna Demanarig, who had a “wonderful a-ha moment...[realizing] I am surrounded by badass womyn in the EC!” Part of the fun included an icebreaker where attendees shared their Western astrological signs, Chinese zodiac signs, their Hogwarts house, and which kitchen appliance they would be and why. Unfortunately, Dr. Catipon firmly stated, “what was shared at the retreat will stay at the retreat.” So, we can only guess who was the countertop ice cube maker and why!



Donna Demanarig (left), wearing a black coat with a navy pom-pom winter hat, with Amanda Breen wearing clear-framed glasses, a blue tee, and a gray hoodie. Both are smiling and have their arms around each other.

Dr. Thomas Kui, co-chair of the AAPA Education & Training Council, mentioned that he was only able to attend the retreat virtually for a brief time. However, “the camaraderie between everyone was evident...there was a warmth and sense of trust that [he] felt, even through a screen.”

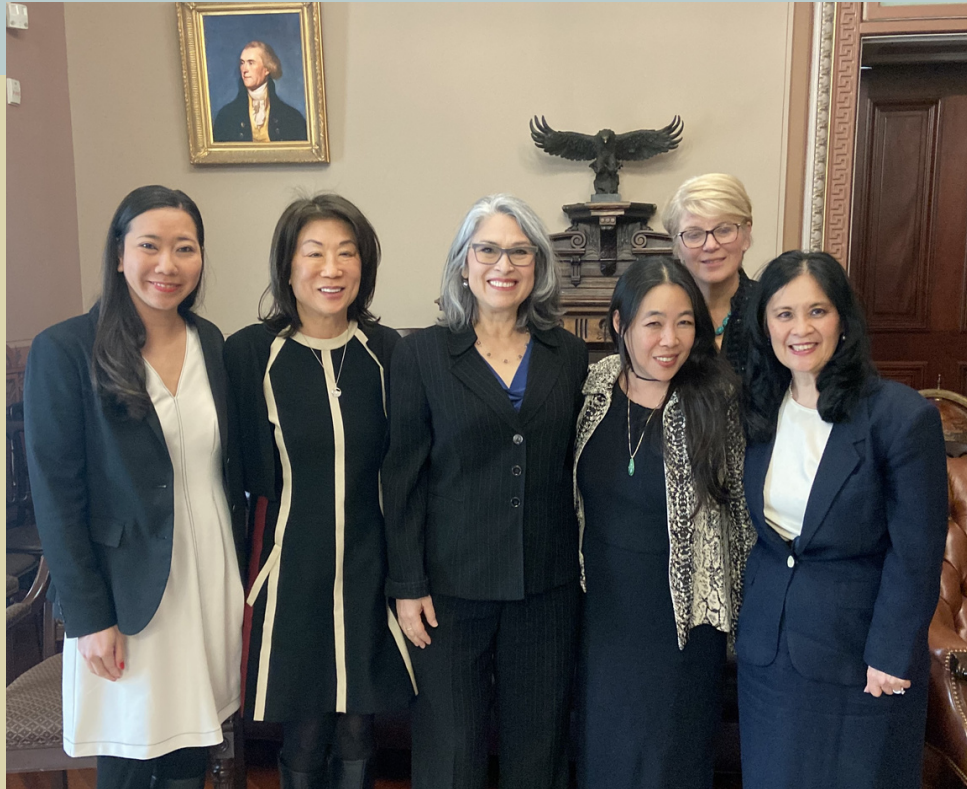
While the retreat was fun, attending to important AAPA business was definitely on the agenda. Dr. Catipon said, “I can’t wait to see what their teamwork and collaboration will bring forth in the coming year!” The coordination, creativity, and good humor they exhibited in the escape room (rated 9/10 difficulty) ought to come in handy as this wonderful group of people leads us into 2024.

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# AAPA & APA VISIT THE WHITE HOUSE

*Written by: Debra Kawahara*

AAPA member and APA President, **Dr. Cynthia de las Fuentes**, and AAPA fellow and APA President-elect, **Dr. Debra Kawahara**, along with APA staff members, **Katherine McGuire** and **Shirley Ann Higuchi**, visited with the White House and U.S. Health and Human Services.



Left to right: Krystal Kai'ai, executive director of WHAANHPI; Shirley Ann Higuchi, JD, APA associate chief for professional practice; Cynthia de las Fuentes, PhD, APA 2024 president; Erika Moritsugu, JD, deputy assistant to the president/AA and NHPI senior liaison; Katherine McGuire, MSc, APA chief advocacy officer; Debra Kawahara, PhD, APA president-elect

This important visit was to advance the **White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)**. Some of the issues discussed included culturally responsive care, multilingual access, and an increase in funding and resources for these communities.

# AAJP New Editor Spotlight



## Dr. Michelle Madore

### Congratulations to our new AAJP Editor-Elect and a call to join her team

---

“

I am deeply honored to share that I will be serving as the incoming editor for the Asian American Journal of Psychology (AAJP). It is a privilege to take on this role for my community, which means so much to me.

”

Please note, we are looking for two individuals who would like to serve as Associate Editors. If you would like to learn more or be considered for this opportunity, please send an email to: [incoming.editor@aapaonline.org](mailto:incoming.editor@aapaonline.org). As we move forward, I encourage all members to stay tuned for forthcoming details about an exciting summer opportunity aimed at learning and enhancing our skills in manuscript peer review. This initiative promises to be invaluable in fostering excellence within our scholarly community, and I eagerly anticipate the chance for us to grow and learn together.



AAPA



# JOIN THE AAPA ETC

## All members are welcome!

The Education and Training Council (ETC) is an established branch of the AAPA Executive Committee that is dedicated to improving education and training for the AAPI community.

### WE INVITE:

- ✓ Undergraduate/graduate students & trainees
- ✓ Early, mid to late career professionals
- ✓ Experiences in settings of academia, clinical practice, & community organizations
- ✓ Knowledgeable of education, training, and social advocacy needs

### DUTIES OF ETC MEMBERS

- Serve at least a term of one year
- Attend monthly 1-hr Council meetings
- Provide additional 1-2 hrs per month for project development
- Collaborate with AAPA leaders and Divisions to identify & meet needs

### TO LEARN MORE & JOIN

#### PLEASE EMAIL ETC CO-CHAIRS

THOMAS KUI, PSYD & LAUREN YANG, PSYD

### AAPA DIVISIONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO HAVE A LIAISON SERVE ON COUNCIL



**Contact us at:**  
[etc.communication@aapaonline.org](mailto:etc.communication@aapaonline.org)

**Visit our webpage**  
[aapaonline.org](http://aapaonline.org)





# YELLOW CHAIR COLLECTIVE

## BOOK SIGNING & DISCUSSION ON ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH

*Written by: Lauren Yang, PsyD (she/her)*



Left to right: Yellow Chair Collective co-directors and co-authors Soo Jin Lee, LMFT, and Linda Yoon, LCSW, with Lauren Yang, PsyD.

On February 10, 2024, Yellow Chair Collective co-directors and co-authors **Soo Jin Lee, LMFT**, and **Linda Yoon, LCSW**, made a stop on their national tour in the Bay Area for an inspiring discussion on Asian mental health and signing of their newly published book, *Where I Belong: Healing Trauma and Embracing Asian American Identity*. Hosted at the Book Passage Bookstore in the San Francisco Ferry Building, the event was co-sponsored by the AAPA Division on Filipinx Americans and Imperial Tea Court.

AAPA Member **Jeannie Celestial, PhD** moderated the book discussion. Dr. Celestial asked poignant questions about the authors' experiences and identities that informed their clinical work and motivations for writing the book. As Korean immigrants, Lee and Yoon recalled the difficulties of feeling othered while recognizing the strengths they had been given by their parents and overall cultural values. Lee and Yoon further shared that while working together in community mental health, they realized that the clinical interventions they had been trained on were not meeting the needs of their Southeast Asian clients. As such, they wanted to develop a guide for us to heal in ways that resonate with us culturally. Dr. Celestial reflected on the practice of self-compassion mentioned in their book, prompting additional thoughts on how to tap back into what brings us joy communally. For example, we can take great delight in playing traditional games (e.g., mahjong) that connect us intergenerationally or feel deeply nourished in sharing beloved food with one another.

“

**I LEFT EVEN MORE GRATEFUL FOR BEING REMINDED THAT WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER AND FEELING AFFIRMED THAT WE REALLY DO BELONG HERE.**

”

In the spirit of this, Lee and Yoon led us in an exercise in which we took a moment to look around the store, really taking in the faces of those with whom we were sharing space and taking heart in that we are part of a community. Lastly, both shared what they would have wanted to tell their younger selves, with Lee emphasizing reassurance and safety (“everything will be okay”) that often escaped her in the face of uncertainty and unsettlement, while Yoon encouraged permission and self-acceptance (“it’s okay to make mistakes”), challenging the pressures of perfectionism, and unlearning what our parents had taught as survival. Among those in attendance were a few AAPA members, who were able to connect with each other after final words were shared.

One of the many important take-home messages from Lee and Yoon’s book and this discussion was that healing is in the collective. Indeed, bell hooks said, “Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation.” This gathering highlighted further how being in community with each other can be incredibly restorative and remains one of our greatest cultural values. It felt even more significant that we came together at the start of Lunar New Year.

This personally brought back into focus for me the importance of taking time to celebrate; I left even more grateful for being reminded that we are stronger together and feeling affirmed that we really do belong here.



Left to right: AAPA members: Kayoko Yokoyama, PhD, Jeannie Celestial, PhD, MSW, Helen Hsu, PsyD, and Lauren Yang, PsyD

### About Yellow Chair Collective

Yellow Chair Collective is a Los Angeles and New York-based psychotherapy group. According to their website, their team is trained in and practices culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and LGBTQIA-affirming counseling and psychotherapy services. Learn more at [yellowchaircollective.com](http://yellowchaircollective.com) and follow on Instagram @yellowchaircollective.

Buy and support their book, “Where I Belong” [here](#).

*Jeannie Celestial PhD is a Co-Coordinator for Mentorship of AAPA DoFA. She is a psychologist and consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area who is passionate about helping AAPI women heal from burnout & reclaim joy. Check out their new book: “Clinical Interventions for Internalized Oppression,” edited by AAPA members Drs. Jan Estrellado, Lou Felipe, and Celestial. Find out more about Celestial [here](#).*



# DIVISION ON MULTIRACIAL AND ADOPTED ASIAN AMERICANS



DMAA welcomed in the New Year with our Executive Committee members Danielle Godon-Decoteau as co-chair and Jason D. Reynolds (Taewon Choi) as treasurer! Please join us in congratulating them as they transition into their new roles.





**SARAH KINANE, MS**

PhD student,  
Fordham University

**DANCING IN DUALITY: GENDERED RACIAL IDENTITY NEGOTIATIONS AMONGST WHITE-PASSING HAPA MALES**



**ALLISO N DRAZB**

PhD Candidate,  
Palo Alto University

**THE ROLE OF PEER INTERACTIONS ON WELLBEING AMONG TRANSRACIAL CHINESE ADOPTEES**



**EMILY LUONG, MA**

PhD Student,  
Adelphi University

**WHITE-ASIAN MULTIRACIAL AMERICANS CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY PROCESSES ON AND OFFLINE**

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Questions? Contact [dmaa.communication@aapaonline.org](mailto:dmaa.communication@aapaonline.org)

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**SAVE THE DATE:**  
Virtual Brown Bag Event  
Highlighting the work of our  
2023 Award Recipients



**DIVISION ON MULTIRACIAL AND ADOPTED ASIAN AMERICANS (DMAA)**

**ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**

**Monday  
April 15,  
2024**

**5-  
6pm  
EST**



[HTTPS://FORDHAM.ZOOM.US/J/3624780824](https://fordham.zoom.us/j/3624780824)

DMAA is also hosting our second annual brown bag event on Monday, April 15th 5-6pm EST showcasing our 2023-2024 DMAA award recipients: Sarah Kinane, M.S., Allison Drazba, and Emily Luong, M.A. Please see the flier for more information. All are welcome to attend and we hope to see you there!





# ABOUT THE ARTIST

## Valerie Yeo, Psy.D. She/They



### Title of Artwork

Cut Fruit

### Description of Your Artwork and Process

This painting was created with soft pastel on toned sanded pastel paper in May 2023.

### What inspired you to create this piece?

Growing up in my Singaporean household, offering cut fruit was a consistent way my family showed care for each other. Even now, I feel warm and cared for when someone offers me cut fruit, especially after a meal. We are living through a time of upheaval and reckoning, and any way that we can show care to each other right now can make an outsized difference, even in the form of offering oranges cut into bite-sized pieces.

### Brief Bio

Dr. Valerie Yeo (she/they) earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Denver. They have worked in many settings, including universities, community mental health centers, and residential facilities. They are presently in private practice based in Portland, OR, providing individual therapy and immigration-based assessments to adults. Dr. Yeo also works with psychology and counseling trainees in supervision, mentorship, and teaching roles. She believes strongly in fostering connection between all parts of ourselves, and her work is centered around navigating the ways in which our sociopolitical environments impact our internal experiences. They are also an artist and community organizer, and they value creating spaces for AAPI community members to grow and thrive.

### Professional Affiliation

Valerie Yeo, Psy.D., LLC

# MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Pooja Mamidanna, LMFT



## **What is your cultural background and identity?**

South Indian

## **What do you cherish from your cultures?**

What I cherish from Vedic culture is the science behind the spiritual practices of yoga, pranayama, and meditation. I get to teach my clients these practices, engaging them in the culturally traditional manner in the clinical work I collaborate in, to help them in their healing journey. I also love the wonderful benefits of Ayurveda and the impact it has in one's holistic well being. And lastly, of course, the South Indian food in my culture, and the significance behind each religious festivities that exist in my culture.

## **Which divisions are you a member of?**

Division on Students, Division on South Asian Americans

## **How did you come to find and become involved with AAPA?**

I got introduced to AAPA from my first ever clinical supervisor in the United States, Dr. Helen Hsu (Past President of AAPA) in 2016, I got introduced to AAPA from my first ever clinical supervisor in the United States, Dr. Helen Hsu (Past President of AAPA) in 2016, when I shared with her how bothered I felt in my graduate program and

clinical spaces I have been in, and that's how I became involved and found my professional family in AAPA. Since 2016, I have been involved in conference planning, was Chair of DoSAA (2020-2021), and am currently on the AAPA Board (Student Rep).

## **Please share a fond or meaningful memory of your experience in AAPA.**

I have many meaningful memories in AAPA. I can't share just one, so I will share my top 3 over the years. The first one was when I got to meet Dr. Kevin Nadal, during my first AAPA conference in 2016. Dr. Nadal has been an inspiration to me in all the work that he has engaged in and it was such an honor to meet him in person, especially when I cited him in several of my classes and read a lot of his work. The second most meaningful memory was when I attended a dim sum social gathering hosted by DoW in 2019, and I got to meet Dr. Reiko True. She has been such a role model I look up to in the field. It was an intimate gathering and we all got to connect on a deeper level and be in community with each other. The third most meaningful memory for me was when I got invited to be a keynote speaker for the AAPA annual convention in 2021. As a young emerging leader, I got to highlight the South Asian voice in a broader professional space that we don't really see much representation in.

### **How can members best take advantage of their membership?**

Don't be afraid to network! Volunteer for positions and engage in the listserv.

### **Anything else you would like to add about your AAPA experience?**

AAPA and the wonderful mentors and colleagues I have met since 2016 have really helped me feel welcomed and supported. I have found my professional family whom I can always reach out to and count on. It has made me feel like my voice matters, and has helped shape me in all my leadership endeavors.

### **How have you changed from the beginning of your career to now?**

One can achieve change every day if they have that passion and drive and are open to that daily self-reflection. I migrated from India when I was 23 years old, and I was really shy.. Being part of AAPA has helped me find my voice and made me understand that my voice matters. I have been an MFT for the past seven years and am currently a third-year Ph.D. student in the clinical psychology program.

Over the years, I have changed my view of psychology. In contrast to the view we often learn in graduate school, I believe in holistic health and well-being and challenging oppressive theories and modalities. Western psychology is still extremely colonized, and they have stolen a lot from communities of color. In my clinical practice, I have learned how to honor my clients' spiritual identities in their healing journey. I take pride in teaching them spiritual practices. I have focused my dissertation on Yoga, pranayama, and meditation to claim back what psychology has taken from Vedic culture.

In my leadership journey within AAPA and APA, I have prioritized getting into "good trouble, necessary trouble" and engaging in global social justice

advocacy within all my leadership positions. I noticed the lack of South Asians in these spaces, and have worked on creating more visibility within my leadership journey. When I first joined AAPA in 2016, South Asian and neurodivergent voices were not highlighted in convention programming. This year in my term as Sessions Co-Chair, along with past convention co-chair (Dr. Dieu Truong), we highlighted the lack of representation in our call for CFP and tried to incorporate this within conference programming. Additionally, AAPA had many wonderful subdivisions, but what was missing was the inter-division collaboration; I had never seen this happen within AAPA before, and this is something we prioritized. We had over 21 submissions from DoISAP, DoSAA, DMAA, DoFAA, DoP, and DoSEAA. There has also never been a town hall hosted during the convention for bringing in all the division leadership; this is an initiative past AAPA COR (Dr. Chandni Shah) and I collaborated on. I plan on continuing to host spaces like this in my leadership within the AAPA Board to continue to bring our subdivisions together in community.

In addition, I am part of Dr. Kevin Cokley's presidential task force of APA Division 45 (the Society of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture). Dr. Cokley's presidential theme for the task force is Fighting Racism With Cross-Racial/Ethnic Solidarity: Toward Being An Accomplice. Through my journey in psychology so far, I have noticed how there needs to be a platform to continue highlighting the voices of psychologists of color. Through my leadership in the task force, I am now the co-host and producer of a podcast known as "Strength in Solidarity", the first of its kind to APA. The Strength in Solidarity Podcast is a conversational piece that invites scholars, community activists and leaders, artists, and entrepreneurs to discuss their work as accomplices in cultivating cross-racial/ethnic solidarity. The

podcast's vision is that we exist because we believe that white supremacy is a public health crisis. Therefore, it is our collective responsibility through critical action and reflection to collaborate and construct a liberated future as accomplices of each other by engaging, educating, evaluating, empowering, and elevating the voices of all communities of color.

### **What advice do you have for someone new in the field?**

Find your professional community, your support systems, and your tribe. You will need that support to endure the systemic racism scholars of color have to endure. Don't be afraid to get involved in leadership, to use your passion and drive in making changes! And don't be afraid to network! Take care of your well being everyday, as you can get burned out easily. Always remember, "it is a sprint, not a marathon". You matter, your voice matters, and you belong here always!

### **What are some of your hopes for the future?**

My hopes for the future are to see more young BIPOC leaders in leadership roles in AAPA and APA, and creating change to help change the field of psychology and setting the stage for future generations to come. We are the future, and just like how our elders from AAPA paved the way for us, we need to continue to do that for future generations. I hope to see more minoritized communities within AAPA running for leadership positions on the AAPA board. Lastly, I hope to see more divisions form within AAPA and to continue to see cross-racial/ethnic solidarity in the spaces and the work we engage in.

**Membership Level**  
Student

**Division Membership**  
Division on South Asian Americans  
Division on Students

**Affiliation**  
California School of Professional  
Psychology and Therapy Now SF.

**Contact**  
Twitter: @PoojaMamidanna  
IG: yourmindandme



## MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

*Sara Ahmed***What is your cultural background and identities?**

South Asian American, specifically Indian American

**What do you cherish from your cultures?**

I cherish the sense of community, the camaraderie, the food, and the music.

**How did you come to find and become involved with AAPA?**

While in my master's program, I realized that I was craving a sense of community when it came to my identity within the counseling and broader educational space. I had so many ideas and felt as though sometimes they were just coined as the "multicultural" ticket out for the program. I wanted a space where I felt like I, and my ideas, belonged and mattered -- I did some Googling -- and found AAPA.

**Please share a fond or meaningful memory of your experience in AAPA.**

One of my favorite panels I attended was "Considering the Colonization and Transformation of Eastern Spiritual Practices in the US Mainstream." As someone in the counseling space, I hear a lot

about mindfulness, wellness, "trauma focused" yoga (really, any psychobabble in front of yoga), and meditation. It always felt "off" to me, and this panel really helped me put a finger on why. It has been transformative in the way that I approach the wellness space myself and how I speak about it to clients.

**Membership Level**

Student

**Division Membership**

Division on South Asian Americans

**Affiliation**

Wake Forest University (MA) and  
University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro (Ph.D. in progress)

**Contact**

[ssahmed3@uncg.edu](mailto:ssahmed3@uncg.edu)



## How can members best take advantage of their AAPA membership?

Attend all the conferences, panels, and talks! It has been such a meaningful experience to learn from people from all different walks of life. It is so refreshing to de-tangle yourself from the Eurocentric psychology that we have all been taught, and learn some new perspectives and worldviews.

*"I wanted a space where  
I felt like I and my ideas belonged and  
mattered...and found AAPA."*

## How have you changed from the beginning of your career to now?

I've changed a lot, and I am hoping to continue changing. My work has made me simultaneously enraged at the systemic issues that plague my clients, while also feeling far more compassion for them, and others in my life, than I have ever felt. I hope to continue to manage my compassion fatigue by spending time doing things that nourish my soul so that I can show up for others. I used to think I had to be a martyr in this field; I'm certainly glad that has changed!

## What are some of your hopes for the future?

I am a current doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I have many interests, but some I am hoping to study and integrate together are the philosophy and application of harm reduction, second-generation South Asian identity, and intergenerational trauma.

## INTERESTED IN SHARING YOUR STORY?

Help us continue to build our AAPA community by sharing about yourself, your experiences, and reflections. Please complete [this form](#) if you would like to be featured in our ongoing Membership Spotlight series.





## Palestinian Liberation

**by Sara Ahmed, MA, LCMHC-A, LCAS-A, NCC (she/her)**

This past winter, I joined my partner's extended family for a gathering. My partner is white, and I am Asian Indian. One morning, my partner's family happened to be curious about their ancestry. As they casually decided to trace their ancestry online, fifteen minutes later and a click granted them generations of family history, free of charge. Laughter filled the room as they discovered old portraits, quaint attire, and unfamiliar names igniting lively conversations. While initially engaged, I later grappled with a deep sadness and introspection. The stark contrast between their effortless access and the vast chasm in my own family history - accessible only if connected through dedicated service to the British Raj - was immense. Ancestry.com offered no solace, a reminder of colonization's enduring grip: my ancestors' stories remained shrouded in silence, swallowed by the shadows of history. It wasn't just a personal realization; it echoed the broader narrative of

dispossession, displacement, and colonialism that continues to reverberate across continents. The struggles of India and countless other countries remind us that this isn't history confined to books and old photographs; it's a present reality demanding our attention. Our very phones bear witness to the devastating effects of ongoing settler colonialism and violent occupation happening right now, as the Palestinian people endure brutal realities. The whole world is watching, finally, although Palestinians have been crying out for help for over 75 years. Through the Nakba, Naksa, the Intifada, today's genocide, and everything in between, the Palestinian people have not let each other's stories remain shrouded in silence. They have instilled within each other a spirit of resilience, of hope, and of courage. In the past five months and 75 years, they have shown the people of the world how to unflinchingly and courageously show up for one another.

Recently, I had someone in my community gently inform me that advocating openly for the Palestinian cause may lead to “missed opportunities” for me in the future. As I reflected upon that, I thought about my identity as a member of the Asian Indian diaspora working in the mental health space, and the sacrifices that have been made by many for me to make it to this point. No longer solely driven by the need to survive like my parents, I have the privilege of pursuing a different calling: advocating for justice, unity, and peace. Yet, for many Asian Americans, immigrant narratives ingrained with aspiration, assimilation, and the pressure of being the “model minority” has created a chilling silence. It’s a paradox woven into the fabric of the Asian diaspora: the inheritance of resilience coupled with the pressure to remain invisible. To that, I leave you with Viet Thanh Nguyen’s question in his article *Palestine Is in Asia*: “For Asian Americans, inclusion is crucial but complicated when it means belonging to a settler and imperial country that promotes the colonization and occupation of other lands - what is the worth of defending our lives if we do not seek to protect the lives of others?”

Mental health and politics are deeply intertwined. As a counselor and future counselor educator, I entered this profession with the intent to ease the



pain that trauma brings. The reality is that systemic issues confine people to cyclical trauma. As therapists, we can support individual clients with tools for distress tolerance and emotional regulation, but those tools are futile if we are not advocating for the end of systems that breed trauma in the first place. As mental health workers, we are often taught that regardless of what field we come from, political “issues” are separate from our work. We need more mental health professionals to understand systems with their contexts, and to support people in anti-oppressive, liberatory ways.

To aid in understanding how to navigate supporting our clients in anti-oppressive, liberatory ways, as well as to support those therapists and healers grappling with the inhumanities happening around the world, I have compiled the following lists of resources and peer support groups.



## Resources for Learning

- USA Palestine Mental Health Network (<https://usapalmhn.org/portfolio-item/books/>)
- Said, Edward W. *The question of Palestine*. Vintage, 1992.
- Khalidi, Rashid. *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917-2017*. Metropolitan Books, 2020.
- Pappe, Ilan. *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine*. Simon and Schuster, 2007
- Abdo-Zubi, Nahla. *Captive revolution: Palestinian women's anti-colonial struggle within the Israeli prison system*. Pluto Press, 2014.
- Abdulhadi, Rabab, Evelyn Alsultany, and Nadine Naber, eds. *Arab and Arab American feminisms: gender, violence, and belonging*. Syracuse University Press, 2011.
- Atshan, Sa'ed. *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*. Stanford University Press, 2020.
- Farris, Sara R. *In the name of women's rights: The rise of femonationalism*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the roots of terror*. Harmony, 2005.
- Masalha, Nur. *The Bible and Zionism: invented traditions, archaeology and post-colonialism in Palestine-Israel*. Vol. 1. Zed Books, 2007.
- Mohammed El-Kurd, "Tomorrow My Family and Neighbors May Be Forced From Our Homes by Israeli Settlers," [The Nation](#), November 20, 2020.
- Noura Erakat and Mariam Barghouti, "Sheikh Jarrah Highlights the Violent Brazenness of Israel's Colonialist Project," [The Washington Post](#), May 10, 2021.
- "Israel v Palestine Conflict," [Last Week Tonight with John Oliver](#), S08E12, May 16, 2021.
- Nora Erakat, interview by Becky Anderson, [CNN](#), May 18, 2021.
- Nimer Sultany, "Peaceful Coexistence in Israel Hasn't Been Shattered - It's Always Been a Myth," [The Guardian](#), May 19, 2021.
- Omar Barghouti, "People of Conscience: Palestinians Ask You to Boycott Israel," [The Guardian](#), May 19, 2021.

## MORE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### PEER SUPPORT/MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

GRIEF CAFE FOR GAZA:

- PEER SUPPORT
- SIGN UP LINK IN BIO @SASHAHERON (INSTAGRAM)



[AMALY](#)

[SUPPORT GROUP LED BY PALESTINIAN THERAPISTS](#)

[RUH APP](#)

FREE MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY SERVICES



### PEER/MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

@MICHELINE.MAALOUF  
@GIGISTHERAPYWORLD  
@BROWNGIRL THERAPY

@DR.HAN.REN  
@HALA.N.ALYAN  
@MELODYHOPELI

### THE CHILD & FAMILY INSTITUTE

- PRO-BONO CRISIS SUPPORT PROGRAM OFFERING SHORT-TERM 1:1 COUNSELING (1-10 SESSIONS) TO ANYONE SEEKING A SPACE TO PROCESS THEIR THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS ETC. [CHILDFAMILYINFO@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CHILDFAMILYINFO@GMAIL.COM)
- FREE VIA ZOOM: NY-BASED, AVAILABLE TO ANYONE LOCATED IN: NY, AL, AZ, AR, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, ME, MD, MI, MN, MO, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NC, ND, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV, WI, WY



### PRACTICAL MAGIC HEALING

- SUPPORT GROUP FOR QUEER PALESTINIANS AND SWANA PEOPLE:  
[FINLAY@PRACTICALMAGICHEALING.COM](mailto:FINLAY@PRACTICALMAGICHEALING.COM)

# Myanmar's Trauma: Under the Radar of Asian American Consciousness

*By Maha Y. See*

*Trauma Trigger Warning*

It was three years ago in February that Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, suffered yet another military coup after enjoying ten years of nascent democracy with elected lawmakers, civil societies, and freedom of expression. Between 1962 and the 'Myanmar Spring,' the country was under the longest running military dictatorship in the world. The oppression and violence perpetrated by the dictatorship led to intergenerational trauma, economic mismanagement resulting in pervasive poverty, and the decimation of the education system. History is repeating itself in this 'impossible' country.

**Looking back.** On August 8, 1988, there was a nationwide uprising against the military that ended with a massacre by the junta. According to the Association for Political Prisoners, Burma (AAPPB), at least 3,000 people were killed, including soldiers who deliberately shot at nurses and doctors treating wounded civilians. By 1990, there were an estimated 3,000 political prisoners. More than 20,000 individuals from the 8888 generation fled Burma. Ethnic minority refugees were finally resettled in the U.S. and elsewhere. In 2010, the 19,400 resettled refugees from Myanmar/Burma were the largest group in the world, followed by Iraq (16,000) and Bhutan (14,800), according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Annual Flow Report (published November 2023) reported 80,000 refugee arrivals from

Burma, the highest among all nationalities, followed by the Congo and Iraq during the fiscal years 2013 to 2022. Various waves of migration from Burma have been trickling into the U.S. since the 1962 coup but were barely noticeable in census data. Funding in community-based organizations is often based on population, and when the numbers are small, as with Burmese refugees, no resources are allocated unless there is unrelenting advocacy.

In the fall of 2006, the community mental health clinic where I worked in Oakland, CA, suddenly received many referrals from other health and social services agencies. Many arrived with physical health problems, severe trauma, family disintegration, adjustment challenges, a lack of English language, and transferable employment skills—exacerbating their post-migration mental health status. Service providers were ill-prepared at all levels. There was also no social support from the very small and fragmented Burmese enclaves. The challenges were intensified by the diversity of languages, ethnic groups (135!), religions, and socioeconomic statuses among these newcomers. Over the past 18 years, supportive communities from Burma/Myanmar have developed across the U.S., including services at community-based organizations. According to the 2020 U.S. Census report, the Burmese (all ethnic groups from Burma/Myanmar) population in the U.S. increased from 17,000 in 2000 to 189,000 in 2019. The majority (11,000) reside in Minneapolis St. Paul, MN; Indianapolis, IN (10,000); and Dallas, TX (10,000). Twenty-five percent of the Burmese population was living in



A new “premium home” in an internally displaced persons camp in Kayah State, Myanmar (Photo by Ko Ni with permission)

poverty in 2019.

**Looking at what’s happening:** For most people in Myanmar, the suffering of COVID-19 was endurable compared to the 2021 coup. The people of Myanmar are now fighting back with arms, according to the language the junta knows. The organized People’s Defense Force (PDF) and various armed ethnic minority groups are now collaborating in fighting back—a civil war is happening. To date, according to the AAPPB, 26,093 individuals have been arrested. There are still 20,105 people being detained, and 4,525 have been killed, including children, and many schools and hospitals have been destroyed. According to the UNHCR, the 2021 coup displaced 160,000 people, many to the Thai-Myanmar border. In addition, the 2017 “operation clearance” by the Myanmar military violently attacked and drove 600,000 Rohingya

Muslim minority people out of Myanmar. They are now in refugee camps on the Bangladesh side of the border. Currently, 860,000 Rohingyas are registered with UNHCR as refugees and asylum seekers in Bangladesh and another 101,000 in Malaysia. Rohingyas have become the present day ‘boat people,’ crossing the seas from Bangladesh looking for a better life in Muslim-majority Malaysia and Indonesia, where they are now unwelcome.

The hallmark of resistance against the 2021 coup is the “Civil Disobedience Movement” (CDM), also known as the ‘Spring Revolution.’ All sectors of society participated in non-violent public protests. The junta retaliated with an internet blackout, arrest, and torture. More recently, bombing places, including schools, where it was thought PDFs were in hiding. Some CDMers have joined the PDF. More recently, the military



has been abducting young men to be soldiers or porters to be used as human shields. CDM and PDF are continuing despite the atrocities of the junta.

We are hearing very little chatter in Asian American communities about the traumatic events unfolding in the lives of the people of Myanmar. With respect to neighboring Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) countries, there is not much attention paid to the civil war going on in Myanmar or the current-day refugees. Two exceptions are Thailand and Malaysia, where they are compelled to deal with the influx of refugees. Even in these two countries, the awareness is more of a regional migration problem and less of a humanitarian crisis.

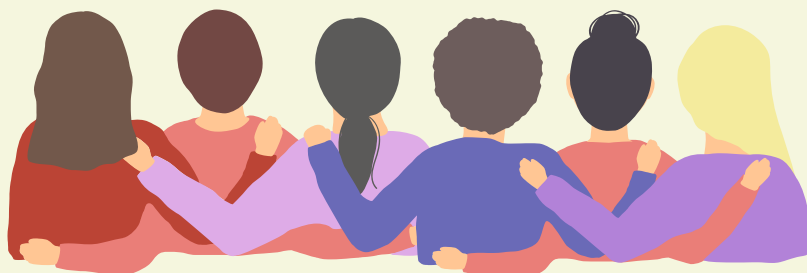
Three years have passed since the coup, and life in Burma is stagnating. More and more people, especially youth, are trying to leave Myanmar. A few have already arrived in the U.S. with their traumas and dreams. Just as I am finalizing

this article, the junta's enforcement of military conscription is causing panic in Myanmar. The question is whether the Asian American community is sufficiently aware and attentive in order to provide needed mental health and social services, taking into consideration competing interests and limited resources.

Mental health service providers know that our clients who are immigrants tend to be triggered or decompensated when something bad happens in their home countries. Most immigrants are affected. The sense of helplessness can be overwhelming.

I hear again and again from CDMers and colleagues working with people from Myanmar: When one is 'small' or considered a small problem on the global stage, one can feel lost and not seen or heard by others. An individual can start to wonder if anybody cares enough to do something to help or even has any awareness of what one is living through.

Maha Y. See, PsyD, works for mental health education and services in San Francisco, Singapore, Myanmar, and Thailand. He founded the Myanmar Clinical Psychology Consortium (MCPC) in Yangon, Myanmar, in 2017 and, since the 2021 coup, continues to operate quietly as an MCPC alumni group.





# Spring Cleaning

## FOR YOUR MENTAL WELL BEING

Written by: Elisha-Rio Apilado

We don't have to do a complete redo of ourselves. We can give ourselves grace and compassion to use this spring cleaning season as a renewal for our mind, body, and spirit.

The holidays are long and we're nearly a third through 2024. We may (or may not, and that's okay!) be keeping track of our New Year's resolutions. Several things might have already happened: obstacles faced, habits developed (or redefined), and stressors introduced (or prolonged).

Read on for tips on how to use spring cleaning with your mental well-being.

When you hear "spring cleaning," do you imagine piles of clothes placed in To Donate boxes or a collection of random items for a summer garage sale? Spring cleaning doesn't only have to be about your physical home. The concept can be applied very well to your mental well-being! It's not always about "out with the old, in with the new."

### *Declutter your mind...*

Use this spring cleaning season as a way to check in with yourselves, gather your thoughts, and see what parts of your lives you may need to **declutter** to achieve the balance between all that you do. It's time to view this new season of fresh starts not only with the flowers blooming outside, but by applying this freshness to ourselves.



## 1

## CONNECTION CHECKUP

This is not about dumping people out of your life. It's about checking in on the connections you currently have and the type of connections you **want** to have. How is your support system working for you now? Are there needs and wants you have been holding back on sharing? Sometimes, it's also a good idea to make note of the **type** of connections you currently have and make adjustments. Are there folks who are draining your energy? Maybe it's time to have an open conversation with them. Maybe there are old friends you haven't spoken to in awhile – hit them up and rebuild that connection! We are all humans and having that human connection, whether through their physical presence, a text, or a phone call, can do wonders for our spirit!



## BOUNDARIES, BOUNDARIES, BOUNDARIES!

## 2

When we get locked down into life's responsibilities and giving to others (Where are my people pleasers at?), we tend to forget to set the proper boundaries with others and even ourselves. Boundaries are meant to protect our peace. Boundaries also are meant to protect our relationships. Take some time to assess what your needs and wants are within relationships, where we may be feeling drained or not heard, or maybe where we're feeling like we're not speaking up to voice our concerns. Practice writing these scripts down and repeating them to yourself before you say them out loud to others. Decluttering our fears of setting boundaries allows us to achieve mental balance.



## 3

## LOOK TO THE MIRROR

Are you pouring back into yourself and doing things that fulfill your soul? Maybe we haven't completely reached our 2024 goals that we set for ourselves just yet (and that's okay!). Maybe we're a bit rocky from the resolutions created on January 1st (and that's okay too!). We are allowed to take time to stop, look at the mirror and within ourselves, and gauge how we're feeling. Doing a refresh does not mean you're starting back at zero. Look at how far you've come along not just in 2024, but throughout the last several years, and give yourself credit on each cycle of renewal you've achieved.





# 4

## MAKE MORE ROOM

Maybe your spring cleaning **does** involve changing up your environment. Cleaning out your physical space (and even that computer desktop full of files) can truly help clean out your mind. Think about the concept of chi, the vital energy essential to the practice of feng shui. Allowing your space to have more room to breathe also allows your chi not to feel overwhelmed or stagnant. You can achieve this by moving around your furniture and opening up some space so you can practice more yoga. Or maybe it's hanging up more artwork on the walls or even simply writing positive affirmations on Post-it notes and placing them around your home office! Whatever it may be, keep in mind that your physical home is your safe space, and you have the control to alter it to your liking.



## REFRESH YOUR ROUTINES

# 5

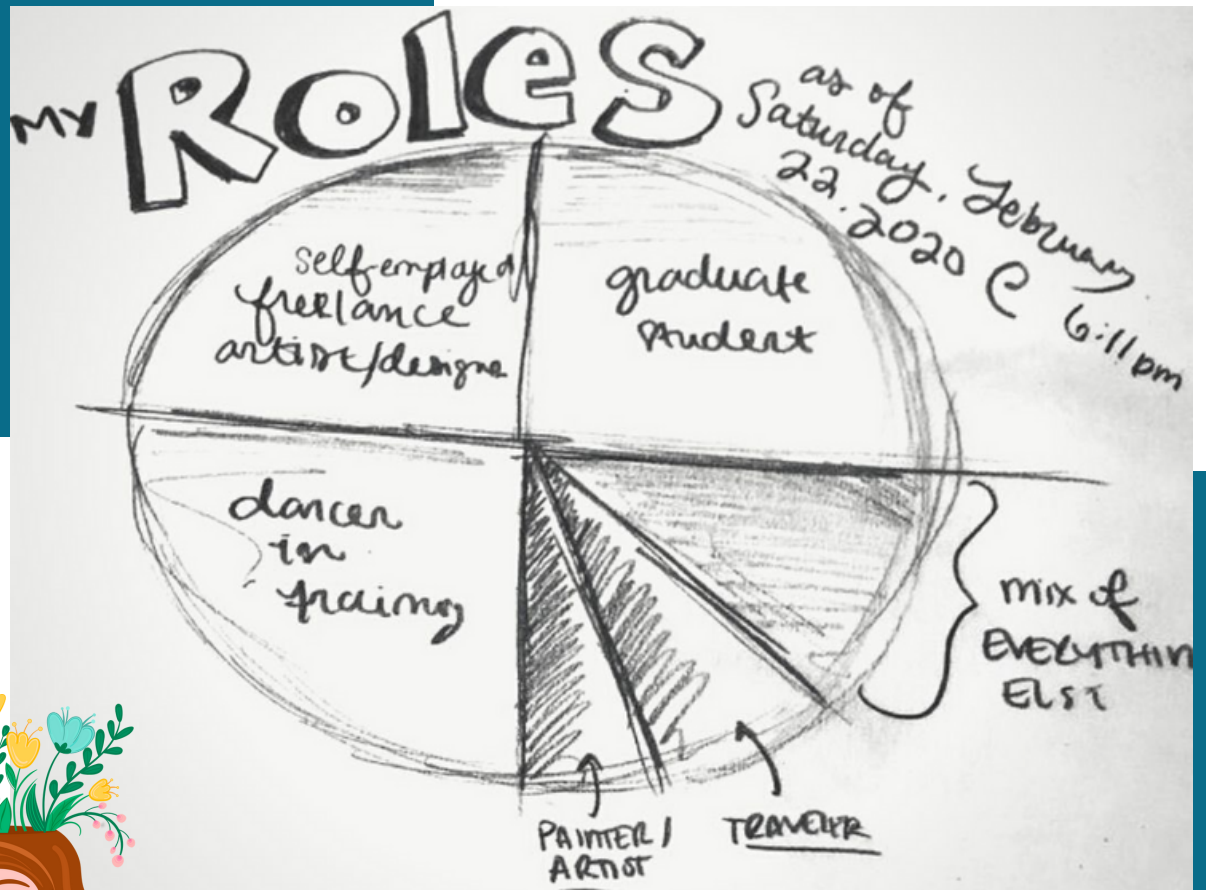
What do you feel like you're missing in your daily routine? Is there anything you could let go? Review your schedule to get a sense of where you're spending your time and energy. Are there subtle changes you could make in the morning to keep your mind sharp and focused for the work day ahead? Maybe you could get **out** of the mundane by taking a different commute route to work or school. Routines don't have to be rigid, either. They can change day to day. By tuning into the present moment, you can make a decision on what you need to do for yourself in order to move forward in a balanced manner.

These may not be all the answers to how you can spring clean your mental health, but it's a good start! If you're more of a visual person, on the next page is an art therapy directive to kick off that reassessment. Happy spring cleaning!



## SPRING CLEANING FOR YOUR MENTAL WELL BEING

# What are your roles? An art directive



We have a lot going on between school, work, personal life, etc. List what your current roles are (i.e., mother/father, student, therapist, daughter, caretaker). Trace a circle and create a pie chart, dividing up the circle according to how much time you've been dedicating to each role.

This exercise allows us to see an overview of where energies are being poured into and what adaptations are needed so that you can live a more balanced life. Take this time to step back and see where you need more time to take a break in or put more energy into. Repeat this exercise every week or month.



# MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



## Caitlyn Suen (she/her) | Co-Editor-in-Chief

Caitlyn (she/her) is one of the new co-editors-in-chief on the newsletter team from 2024 to 2026. Caitlyn is originally from Malaysia and migrated to the USA a few years ago. As a Chinese Malaysian, Caitlyn speaks multiple languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Malay, and English. Caitlyn is currently pursuing her doctorate at Palo Alto University. She graduated with an MS in Psychology in Coaching and an MS in Neuroscience and Cognition from the University of Texas at Dallas. Caitlyn is also a certified-trained coach, providing coaching services for international students, immigrants, and first- and second-generation Asian Americans. Caitlyn was also actively engaged in Asian American research with Sparkle Insights. Outside of her professional pursuits, Caitlyn enjoys leisurely outdoor activities and sports.

## Sasha Mieko Vasilou (she/they) | Co-Editor-in-Chief

Alexandra Vasilou is one of the new co-editors-in-chief for the newsletter from 2024 to 2026. Her Japanese name is Mieko Fujisawa 藤澤美恵子, but her friends call her Sasha! Sasha is of Japanese (yonsei), Greek, and Irish descent. She is the granddaughter of citizens who were incarcerated in US "internment" camps during WWII. Participating in the AAPA community while pursuing her Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Northwestern University was an honor, and Sasha is excited to transition to actively contributing as a budding professional. Her clinical interests include historical trauma, civil courage, and counterculture as avenues for healing. Sasha admires the revolutionary work of the queercore punk scene, given the importance of music as a crucial tool for maintaining her own personal well-being.



# MEET THE COLUMNISTS



## **Elisha-Rio P. Apilado (she/her) | Columnist/Reporter**

Elisha-Rio P. Apilado, LPC, ATR-P, is an artist, dancer, and art therapist from Chicago, Illinois. She worked in advertising and art direction for 10 years before switching careers to art therapy. Elisha-Rio graduated from Adler University in 2021 and is currently working as a Young Adult Mood PHP Therapist. She is on a mission to advocate for the importance of expressive arts therapy and how it can be utilized to break the stigma surrounding mental health, specifically within the Filipino/a/x community. Her focus is on using the arts to open up communication about colorism and the long-term effects of colonialism. When she's not advocating for the importance of a multiculturally-informed approach to counseling, she is busy training at the dance studio or traveling to complete an art bucket list: see each city's art museum at least once.

## **Sara Ahmed (she/her) | Columnist/Reporter**

Sara Ahmed, MA, LCHMCA, LCASA, NCC, is a mental health therapist in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She is also currently in a doctoral program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, getting her Ph.D. in counseling and counselor education. Sara's passion includes working with people who have substance use concerns, utilizing a non-judgmental, strengths-based approach rooted in harm reduction. Her research interests include culturally adaptive mental health interventions, help-seeking behaviors, and structural barriers to mental health and addiction services. She is passionate about community-based approaches to mental health and addiction, specifically among refugee and immigrant communities. Outside of school and counseling, Sara enjoys reading feel-good fiction, spending time outdoors, and connecting with friends.



## **Sue H. Kim, PhD (she/her) | Columnist/Reporter**

Sue (she/her) is a licensed psychologist in solo-private practice. She just moved to the Twin Cities in July 2023 after living in rural New Hampshire for 22 years, and she is now seeing her NH clients with a 100% telehealth practice. Sue's dad is from Korea and came to the U.S. for college when he was 17, and her mom is White (born and raised in Mount Joy, PA). She is active with the NH Psychological Association and has been a columnist for the AAPA newsletter since 2022. She is learning to give herself permission to do abstract paintings.



# MEET THE LAYOUT TEAM

## Jacqy Lopez (she/her) | Layout Editor



Jacqy Lopez is a new layout editor on the newsletter team. She conducts research and evaluation for a leading behavioral health provider in King County, WA. She has over a decade of experience in mental and behavioral health, from community-based clinical work to more recently, working in academic, clinical, and policy research these past five years. Jacqy completed dual master's degrees in Applied Psychological Science and Healthcare Administration at Pacific University. Since 2020, she has been actively involved with AAPA, participating in poster and symposium presentations at annual conventions. Her research interests revolve around culture-centered approaches to counseling and the integration of Indigenous spirituality into clinical practice. Jacqy looks forward to contributing to the cohesive narrative of the AAPA community.

## Chloe Pertierra (she/her) | Layout Editor

Chloe Pertierra is a new layout editor on the newsletter team. She graduated with her bachelor's in psychology from the University of California, Merced. She is currently a clinical psychology PsyD student at Alliant International University, Fresno. Chloe is passionate about providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed, evidence-based care to vulnerable and underserved populations. Her clinical and research interests include trauma, severe mental illnesses in adults, and multicultural issues.



## Shanthi Guruswamy (she/her) | Layout Editor



Shanthi Guruswamy is a new layout editor on the newsletter team. She graduated with her BA in Psychology with a dual minor in Asian American Studies and French from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She graduated with honors with an MA in Counseling from Saint Mary's College of California. Currently, she is an AMFT/APCC located in the state of California. In her free time, Shanthi loves going to concerts, spending time with her dogs, and baking.



# MEET THE COPY EDITORS



## **Alicia Geng (she/her) | Copy Editor**

Alicia Geng (she/her) is a new copy editor on the newsletter team. Currently enrolled in a doctorate program in school psychology at UC Santa Barbara, her alma mater is UC Berkeley. Alicia's research focuses broadly on school-based mental health, with a specific interest in exploring cultural differences in parent perspectives on student mental health. Additionally, she holds a certification as a yoga teacher and is dedicated to community well-being. As her career progresses, Alicia hopes to find ways to bridge her interests in mental health and yoga.

## **Lydia Lui (she/they) | Copy Editor**

Lydia has served as a copy editor for the AAPA Newsletter since 2022. She recently received her Master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from the University of Minnesota in December 2023. Lydia has also initiated her own coaching practice, Wise Jade Coaching, and is a licensed attorney and professional violinist. Her memorable life experiences include performing with Yo-Yo Ma, Seiji Ozawa, and The Who. During her leisure time, Lydia enjoys traveling, photography, and following women's sports.



## **Linda Zheng (she/her) | Copy Editor**

Linda discovered AAPA during her time at graduate school at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and has served as a copy editor since 2022. She is currently working as a pre-licensed therapist in private practice in Eagan, Minnesota. Linda primarily works with young adults who have historically marginalized identities and experiences. Outside of work, Linda finds fulfillment through community advocacy, creating art, reading, playing tennis, spending time outdoors, and reconnecting with her heritage through food.





### **Linh-Nhu Hoàng (she/her) | Copy Editor**

Linh-Nhu (she/her) is a returning copy editor for the AAPA official newsletter, *The Asian American Psychologist*. She is currently a doctoral student in clinical psychology in Michigan, with research and clinical interests in integrated behavioral health work with both pediatric and racial/ethnic minority populations. She also works as a master's level psychologist at a private practice and enjoys getting involved and networking with professional organizations such as AAPA, APA, and MPA. Outside of school and work, Linh-Nhu enjoys reading, paddleboarding, doing Muay Thai, playing tennis, and eating and spending time with loved ones.

### **Darcy Ing (she/her) | Copy Editor**

Darcy Ing is a licensed clinical psychologist who works with a multicultural population at Waimanalo Health Center, a federally qualified health clinic based on Native Hawaiian values. She also works for Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii, where she specializes in pastoral counseling and psychological assessments for clergy. Darcy has presented on various mental health topics for congregations and Christian and Buddhist clergy. She has a strong interest in multicultural issues and the psychology of religion and spirituality.



### **Sheela Kamath (she/her) | Copy Editor**

Sheela Kamath is an associate marriage and family therapist in the San Francisco Bay Area. She works with adults, children, and families on issues including depression, anxiety, complex trauma and PTSD, immigration and acculturation, relational conflict, grief, and domestic violence. She received her MA in counseling psychology from The Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. In her free time, Sheela reads Webtoons, meditates, and tries to pet as many dogs as possible. She has been copyediting for *The Asian American Psychologist* since 2022.





Are you interested in contributing to advancing ANHPI psychology?  
 Do you have an idea for a related topic you'd like to write about?  
 Do you have any exciting news or announcements?  
 Do you want to share about your experience at a recent conference?  
 Do you want to connect with others through your art or poetry?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above. . .

## ***YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU***

The AAPA Newsletter Team would love to collaborate with you!

We welcome commentary on **current events, personal reflections, cultural events and celebrations**. etc. We also encourage AAPA members to nominate colleagues and peers to highlight their **accomplishments**. Examples may include but are not limited to AAPA **events, new positions, awards, honors, graduation/commencement, licensure, tenure, publications**, etc.

### **Visual Media and Artwork**

Throughout the year, we invite AAPA members to submit their visual artwork or photography for consideration as the cover of the newsletter or featured in general.

### **Membership Spotlights**

We are also looking to highlight more of our AAPA membership and continue building our community. We all would love to learn more about you, your experiences, and reflections.

For information on how to submit your contributions to the newsletter, please contact [newsletter@aapaonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aapaonline.org).

*The AAPA Newsletter is the space for our membership to learn about, get to know, and celebrate each other. Everyone has a story to tell, and we would love to feature yours. Our Newsletter Team would like to thank you for your valuable submissions. We look forward to receiving your articles and announcements.*

**COVER PAGE**

Artist: Valerie Yeo  
 Copy Editor: Newsletter Team  
 Layout Design: Jacqy Lopez

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