

*Spring 2022*

# ***THE ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST***

***The Official Newsletter of the Asian  
American Psychological Association***



# IN THIS ISSUE



ANNOUNCEMENTS + CULTURE + PROFILES

- 3 PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
- 5 CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF MESSAGE
- 7 MEMBERSHIP REPORT
- 8 FINANCE OFFICERS' REPORT
- 9 REPORTER RECRUITMENT

**15 DIVISION ON MULTIRACIAL & ADOPTED ASIAN AMERICANS NEWS**

- 16 INTERVIEW WITH DMAA'S CHAIR ELECT DR. JESS BENSON AND STUDENT REP MOLLY SAWDY BY SUE H. KIM, PH.D



**"YOU ARE DANGEROUS TO ME" A FEW STORIES FROM MY PERSONAL ANTIRACISM JOURNEY**

BY SUE H. KIM, Ph.D



**THE OTHER ONES**

ART BY LEE COMIC

- 18 THE LASTING IMPACT OF #VERYASIAN BY J. ANGEL DIANNA

- 20 NOW YOU SEE ME  
ART BY JACQUELENE LOPEZ

- 22 DOSEAA & DOISAP ANNOUNCEMENT

- 26 JUST FOR FUN

- 27 MEET THE TEAM

# President and Vice President's Column



Greetings, esteemed AAPA Members!

We are very excited to be writing our first presidential column for the AAPA newsletter. We wanted to share this moment with you together, and in doing so hope to let you all get to know us a little better.

## Meet Anjali Amin, Ph.D., President

I would be remiss if I didn't first acknowledge my origins. My story started long before I got here during my paternal and maternal grandparents' migration from Gujarat, India to Kampala, Uganda. Both families settled in East Africa, raising the generation that would most directly shape and mold me into the person I am today. Our family value of being in service to others inspired my journey into the Counseling Psychology program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. And since then, I have spent the majority of my career working for the VA, across a variety of programs, and learning much about myself and the world from our Veteran community.

Outside of my professional life, I am known in my family as being an avid reader. They can all attest to the fact that I am never short of a book to lend or recommend to others. Some of my favorites in the past year have included: *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi; *The Largesse of the Sea Maiden* by Denis Johnson; *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee; and *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart. I find the most joy in connecting with those whom I love, which usually happens over a shared meal, while playing word games, when receiving weekly updates on the Premier League from my niece and nephew, and in comparing notes on the latest movies and TV series (currently catching up on *Pose* and *The Gilded Age*). When the mood strikes, I also enjoy diving into a new recipe and baking.

## Meet Christine Catipon, Psy.D., Vice President

Where my story begins may sound familiar to anyone who is the first born child of immigrant parents who came to the U.S. to give their future children a better life. I was constantly pressured by my large extended family to become a doctor, thanks to my straight As in kindergarten. So I went to UC Irvine as a pre-med student, went to the Philippines on a medical-surgical mission as an undergraduate and realized I did not want to be a physician. I then spent ten years conducting pharmaceutical research, and eventually began a second career as a doctor on my own terms. And now I have the privilege of working with young adults in helping them explore their intersectional identities, heal intergenerational trauma, and discover their amazing selves as a senior staff psychologist at the Counseling Center at my beloved alma mater, in addition to seeing a few long-term clients in private practice.

On a personal note, I love to sing and play the piano (inspired by Nia Peeples, the first Filipina I ever saw on TV), play mahjong and board games, enjoy different cuisines and write about them on IG (@four\_foodie\_femmes), watch cartoons and competitive cooking shows, hang out with my partner and my pup, and be a closeted nerd with a love of all things related to Marvel (and some DC), Star Wars, Harry Potter, LOTR, Steven Universe, and Disney.



## Our Journey in Friendship

We first met at the Portland EC Retreat in 2017, with Anjuli as Membership Chair for DoP and Christine as the Co-Chair for DoFA—and we hit it off right away! A few months after the retreat we organized a local AAPA meetup and got together in LA for a meal in Thai Town. This was a moment that deepened our friendship by way of our love of food, laughter, and camaraderie. Our friendship has been five years in the making, so it felt like a natural fit to run together as President and Vice President of AAPA.

Since then, we have continued to bond over tasty food, a love of travel, Wordle, being UCI alumni (Zot Zot Zot!), and shared personal and professional experiences identifying as Brown Asian female clinicians. We have also found commonality in our values related to work-life balance and self-care, our experiences of working our way up into leadership positions with no legacy ties, and our shared intentionality for creating spaces within AAPA that provide opportunities to heal from the recent experiences we as a community have faced.

## Our Vision for AAPA

As we prepared to step into our roles this year we spent a lot of time reflecting on our own personal histories within AAPA, what we had observed of AAPA's growth in recent years, and the ways in which current events were impacting our field. These conversations inspired what have now become our presidential initiatives.

**Self-care**—We aim to shed light on the ways in which the recent pandemic has impacted mental health professionals and called into question traditional work ethics, practices, and systems. We seek to move away from the conceptualization of self-care as an individual act and create new systems of care that align with collectivist values and that draw upon our own cultural wisdoms for healing.

**Moving AAPA forward**—As we celebrate the 50 year anniversary of AAPA in 2022, it is essential to build new infrastructure that allows AAPA to stay current and sustain itself for the next 50 years. The growth we have experienced in recent years requires us to implement new procedures and update current systems, which in turn will facilitate a more seamless operation.

**Connection**—Establishing a stronger connection between all of the branches of our organization. This includes Divisions, committees, programming, and the Executive Committee. These strong connections are necessary to optimize our work, enhance the creative process, and attend to the intersections of our diverse communities. We seek to develop pathways that improve collaboration and communication among all of our working parts.

**Social Justice**—There can no longer be a mental health field that does not include social justice as an inherent part of our work as clinicians, consultants, educators, and researchers. To that end, it remains a priority for us to increase inclusivity within AAPA, addressing the harms perpetuated within our own diaspora. We seek to account for the ways in which anti-Blackness has been present within our communities, bringing awareness to this issue, and taking action to end this. We pledge also to continue adding to the history of cross-racial solidarity that many who have come before us have built.

**"We seek to move away from the conceptualization of self-care as an individual act and create new systems of care that align with collectivist values"**

**"There can no longer be a mental health field that does not include social justice as an inherent part of our work as clinicians, consultants, educators, and researchers."**

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).

APRIL 2022



Lauren Yang



Uyen Sophie Nguyen

## The Asian American Psychologist

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

We are absolutely thrilled to begin our term as Co-Editors-in-Chief with this Spring 2022 issue of the Asian American Psychologist, as we also celebrate the 50th year anniversary of the Asian American Psychological Association being founded. Although we are both relatively new to AAPA as student members, we are intent on learning even more about our AAPA community and raising the many diverse voices of our leaders, mentors, colleagues, and peers.

During our two-year term, the newsletter will continue its traditional role as a platform for sharing important news, events, and information with our members. The newsletter will also provide an open space for raw and reflective dialogues about current issues that impact our work and our communities at large. We hope to engage more members in contributing to the Asian American Psychologist and to amplify the wide range of diverse and unique voices among all of us. To these ends, we strive to be even more mindful of inclusivity and more intentionally social justice-oriented.

In reflecting on the past two years of being in a pandemic, we are grateful for what we have been able to personally accomplish, as well as how we have been taking care of ourselves. Lauren recently matched to a postdoctoral fellowship with Kaiser

Permanente in Redwood City, California, and will defend her dissertation in early May. In her free time, she continues to be active with dog sitting (as she waits to have a fur baby of her own) while exploring the Bay Area for good food spots (with sushi and tacos as her weaknesses).

Sophie passed the first part of her comprehensive exam last fall, with one more to go this spring. Thanks to AAPA, she also connected with two wonderful friends and colleagues who provided much needed support for her first independent research project. It was challenging—but rewarding—to analyze data in Vietnamese, her native language. Outside of school and work, Sophie tries to read and meditate daily-ish as her new self-care routine.

While we have had much to celebrate, it has not been lost on us that in the past two years, our AAPI community has also experienced incredible pain with our hearts heavy with grief and rage. Ongoing anti-Asian hate crimes have horrified but sadly not surprised us, and the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to disproportionately impact marginalized groups with significant mental health consequences. Yet, connection with each other and our loved ones has served as a light in these dark times, even if from afar.

This Lunar New Year, we welcomed in the Year of the Tiger, which aptly can be seen as a symbol of resilience, fierceness, and bravery. The article, "Lunar New Year: A Celebration for Everyone," captures what this holiday means for some of us and our broader community ([pgs. 10-11](#)). We have also witnessed a movement that redefined a racist voicemail message of hate into a resounding promotion of community pride, which is explored further in the article, "The Lasting Impact of #VeryAsian" on [pgs. 18-19](#).

With these aforementioned themes in mind, this Spring 2022 issue of the Asian American Psychologist contains a few new additions. As some of you may have seen on our listserv, Martin Lee and Richard Lee started a comic series called The Other Ones by Lee, which Richard has stated, "highlights the experiences of historically marginalized and oppressed communities." We are honored to feature one of these comics on [pg. 14](#). Referencing the Black Lives Matter movement, this comic is an important reminder of the racial injustice that affects us all, especially as we celebrated Black History Month in February.

We are also moved by the powerful imagery of Jacqueline Lopez's digital collage art, "Now You See Me," which reflects both the incredible diversity of Asian Americans and the collective pain that is shared ([pgs. 20-21](#)). Inspired by the many talents of our members, we eagerly welcome more visual art submissions for inclusion in upcoming issues.

Moreover, we are very excited to work with our newsletter team, and we have already been encouraged by their enthusiasm, creativity, and diligence. You may learn more about us and our team on [pages 27-31](#). We are also looking to recruit additional reporters/columnists for our 2022-2024 newsletter team. We value a wide variety of perspectives and ideas, and we are keen on working with engaged and active members from our AAPA community. If you are interested, you may find out how to apply for the position on [page 9](#).

As we continue to learn more about AAPA, we are so proud to be a part of this association with much history and impactful leadership behind it. Together with our newsletter team, we look forward to sharing news and events, while also elevating the diverse voices and talents of our members. We always welcome any comments and suggestions, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly at [newsletter@aapaonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aapaonline.org). Warm wishes to all for a safe and restful spring season.

# Happy April!



## Updates from the Membership Team

Thank you for being an AAPA member. We continue to be excited about recent updates to the AAPA website related to membership. As a result of the automation of various tasks, some members will receive emails asking them to update their accounts. We appreciate our members' patience as we go through this process.

Currently, AAPA has a total membership count of 1,320 members. Membership continues to steadily grow. Student members continue to comprise the majority of our membership. See the table below for a breakdown of our membership by membership type.

Members can make changes to their accounts by logging in online at [aapaonline.org](http://aapaonline.org). If you cannot remember your password, there is an option to reset it. By logging in online, you can join our wonderful AAPA Divisions and change your email address for the listservs.

Your AAPA membership lasts for a year from the date that you signed up and will be automatically renewed after the year is complete. Please email us if you would like to opt out of having your membership automatically renewed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding AAPA membership or the new website changes, please do not hesitate to contact our membership team at [membership@aapaonline.org](mailto:membership@aapaonline.org).

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

### MEMBERS

Student	770
Professional	541
Retiree/Emeritus	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,320</b>

## Best wishes,

AAPA Membership Team (Oscar, Carla, Amanda, and Kavita)

# Finance Officers' Report

AAPA's Co-Finance Officers (FOs) Cat Bitney, Amanda Breen, and Michelle Madore are happy to report that AAPA's bank accounts are in good condition. Our total combined balance from ETrade, Chase and PayPal is \$341,403.26 as of March 1, 2022. Subtracting fiscal agent accounts and AAPA Division balances, AAPA's main account has \$255,991.29 in working capital.

The FOs are also pleased to share the following updates with the AAPA membership:

**2022 Budget** The FO team is working closely with AAPA President Anjuli Amin to finalize the 2022 budget and will seek approval from the EC in the coming weeks.

**2022 Budget Requests** Once the 2022 budget is approved by the EC, the FO team will disburse funds to divisions and other teams. We have reviewed all budget requests thoroughly and in collaboration with Anjuli. All teams should have received notifications regarding the status of their budget requests at this point.

**Reimbursement and Payments** Please continue to use this link for reimbursement/payment requests:

<https://forms.gle/FY3TB5FDG4MZ8fz1A>



**Finance Assistants** Two graduate students, Sophia Sablan and Stephanie Ong, are now serving as finance assistants to help with administrative tasks.



# CALLING FOR REPORTERS!

We are excited to announce that we are accepting applications for columnists/reporters to join the 2022-2024 AAPA Newsletter Team. We welcome applicants who wish to gain experience in contributing to a national publication, as well as become more involved in AAPA. We are especially interested in working with those who are intent on engaging further with the AAPA community.

The newsletter is a primary way in which members can communicate about their research work, clinical practice, commentary on social policy, and personal achievements; for the AAPA Divisions to share their announcements and events; and for the AAPA Executive Committee (EC) to connect with and distribute pertinent information to AAPA members. The newsletter is published in three issues: Spring, Summer, and Fall with a production timeline spanning 8-9 weeks per issue.

*Members can communicate about their research work, clinical practice, commentary on social policy, and personal achievements*

Duties of the position will include the following:

- Write articles up to 1,000 words on areas of interest to Asian American psychology
- Collaboratively develop ideas for articles and content to be included in the newsletter
- Conduct interviews of AAPA members who have made notable contributions to the field
- Review and approve edits by copy editors in a timely manner (within a week)
- Attend online team meetings in preparation for each newsletter issue (one per issue)

Strong writing skills are preferred. Please note that this would not involve academic or research writing, but this does not preclude professional, inclusive, and clear communication in writing.

Position duration is flexible, although at least three months (production of one issue) is preferred. We kindly ask that Co-Editors-in-Chief are notified when such commitment changes.

To apply, please submit a brief statement of interest including past experiences and a writing sample to [newsletter@aapaonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aapaonline.org). We look forward to reading your application!

# LUNAR NEW YEAR: A CELEBRATION FOR EVERYONE

BY NICOLE R. BENQUECHEA

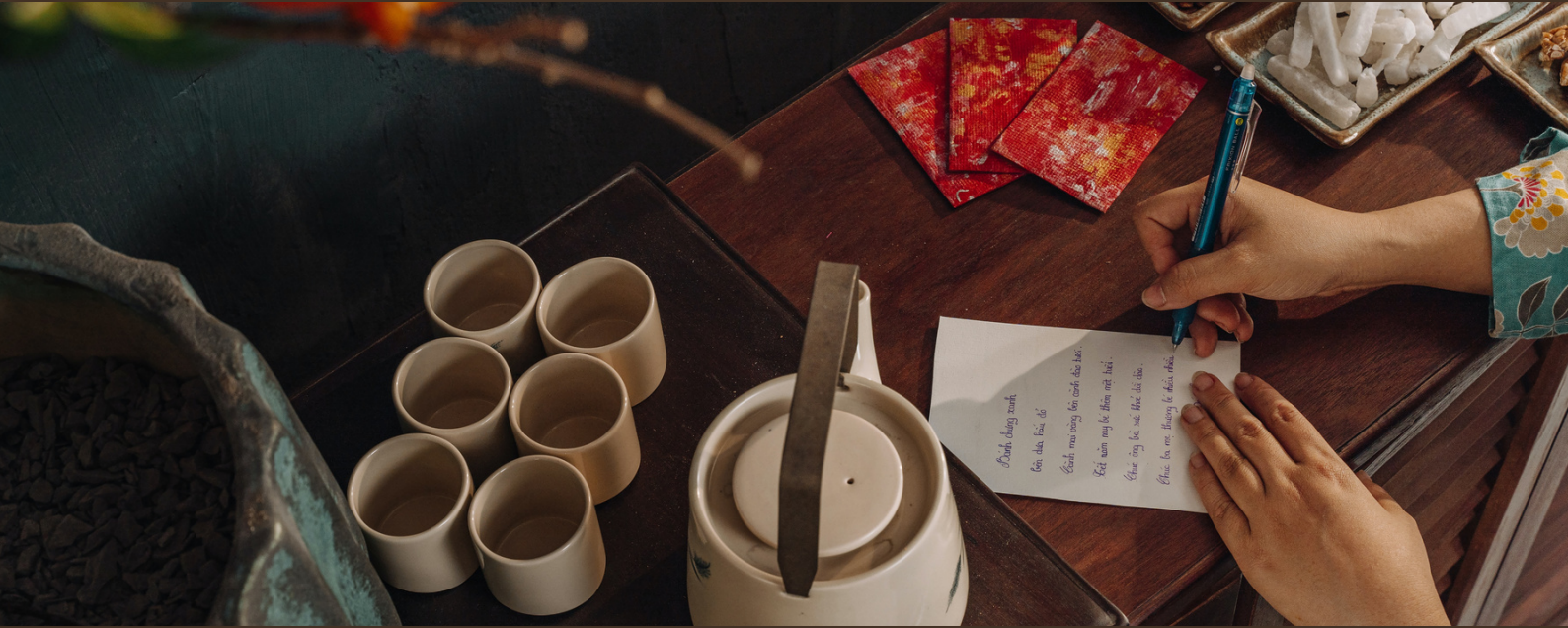


Photo by HyggeLab Concept on Unsplash

## Happy Year of the Tiger: A History of Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year is a festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year, based on the traditional Chinese calendar or lunar calendar when there is a new moon. This festival is typically celebrated over fifteen days and is also known as Chinese New Year, Spring Festival, and Lunar New Year. Each year in the Chinese lunar calendar is named for one of twelve animals: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit (or cat), dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. This year, 2022, is the Happy Year of the Tiger.

Various Asian cultures have their distinct ways of ringing in the new year. In China, standard practices include giving family members, especially children, red envelopes that contain money and setting off firecrackers. Some families eat foods such as

dumplings, which symbolize unity. In some instances, Korean individuals and families will put on traditional clothing and prepare foods like a New Year's rice cake and a dish made from five different grains. Meanwhile, some Vietnamese families make a five-fruit platter to respect their ancestors. They also have special foods such as *bánh chưng*, a square rice cake filled with pork, and beans wrapped in bamboo leaves.

Individuals, families, and communities have their own meaning about the Lunar New Year. In the Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA), many members have been striving in their personal and professional careers despite the challenges of the pandemic. I had the opportunity to speak with Alicia Del Prado, a member of the AAPA and a counseling psychologist. She is currently working in private practice and does DEI consulting work at Del Prado Counseling and Consulting in Danville, California.

She is making great strides in her career and continues to practice traditions that are important to her. Additionally, she recently

co-authored Proud of my Mommy in 2020. Lastly, in 2021 she also won the Most Influential Filipina Woman of the World Award.

Alicia Del Prado shared, "I'm multiracial Filipina and Italian, and we did not celebrate the Lunar New Year."

She explained, "My father is Filipino American, and my mom is Italian American. My paternal grandmother Mercedes was very proud of her Chinese ancestry and spoke fondly of her Chinese father, who emigrated from China to the Philippines. Mercedes' mother was Spanish, and my great-grandparents' marriage wasn't approved of by their parents which perhaps played a role in which traditions did and didn't get actively retained. The tradition of Chinese New Year didn't get passed onto me. My second grader is learning about Lunar New Year in class, which I'm thankful for."

Prado has shared a picture of one of their art projects below. With a growing rise in anti-Asian sentiment, individuals and communities face discrimination, isolation, and violence against people of Asian descent. However, powerful measures are being taken for Asian Americans in the United States to be valued and heard. U.S. Rep. Grace Meng, a Democrat from Queens, New York, and First Vice-Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, has introduced legislation to create a federal holiday for Lunar New Year. The measure would make Lunar New Year a federally recognized holiday in the U.S., adding it to the list of eleven national holidays currently recognized.

*"I'm multiracial Filipina and Italian, and we did not celebrate the Lunar New Year."*

*- Alicia Del Prado*

This powerful message shows the unity of the Asian American communities and individuals trying to share their traditions and culture with the world.

## Final Reflection

Our school's week-long Lunar New Year celebration provided different cultural experiences for young students. Through our explorations of the similarities and differences in culture, traditional practices, festivals, foods, symbolic color meanings, and alphabet writing, students learned about other ways of living and being across the globe, which strengthened their intercultural understandings. Lunar New Year is an incredibly important, festive, and profoundly traditional holiday for Asian Americans. It's the most significant time of year for the Asian American community and is celebrated in the U.S. and across the globe. The AAPA Newsletter Team hopes everyone has a prosperous holiday to all who celebrate and express respect for Asian Americans and all individuals worldwide who observe the holiday.



Photo by: Alicia Del Prado sharing a picture of one of their art projects below.

# YOU ARE DANGEROUS TO ME

A FEW STORIES FROM MY  
PERSONAL ANTIRACISM  
JOURNEY

BY SUE H. KIM, PhD

I've spent my entire career helping my clients feel safe and secure in my presence. So, when a fellow psychologist told me that I was "dangerous" to her, I was shocked and confused.

But now I understand so much better.

My white adjacency and my upbringing, which involved being heavily assimilated into white American culture, have made me a weapon of whiteness.

In the December 2021 AAPA Newsletter, Dr. Derald Wing Sue described four ways that we can "disarm and dismantle individual and systemic racism and bias." And the first one is to make the "invisible" visible.

But that would require me to see what I have been taught not to see.

Growing up in predominantly white neighborhoods and unconsciously sucking in so many aspects of white supremacy culture enabled me to experience a lot of success in my early life. My Korean dad, who immigrated when he was 17, was always happy when I brought home all A's. He was beyond thrilled when I got my doctorate, despite it being in psychology. "You don't want to work with crazy people, do you?"





Another thing my dad taught me was to be quiet. Compliant. And to please people, especially those in authority like professors, bosses, and people with power, almost always white people.

Now, as I continue to un-brainwash myself from all the racist messages I was taught and to attempt to confront the white supremacist ideas I am starting to see EVERYWHERE, I am discovering that being a quiet and compliant people-pleaser is a major liability.

“**I am finding that it's my failures that are the most productive learning in my antiracism journey.**”

So, first I have had to learn to see the racism that is everywhere (including inside my brain), and then I have had to learn to speak up and address it (even though I have been conditioned to avoid confrontation).

Usually, people like to talk about their successes, their achievements, and their wins. I get that. I used to love showing my all-A report card to my dad to get his approval. But I am finding that it's my failures that are yielding the most productive learning in my antiracism journey. Times when I have unconsciously acted out assumptions that are racist, heterosexist, ableist, or some other horrible thing - and have been given a gift from someone else of authentic, honest, and direct feedback - those have been gut-wrenching and eye-opening moments when my own personal growth has leapt forward as I took the feedback and tried to understand it and change.

There was the time when I thought it would be a great idea for white colleagues to present on the basics of racial literacy (“how great is it that white people would be teaching white people, rather than placing the burden of educating on people of color”)... not realizing that I had not checked in first with my colleagues of color who had been mentoring all of us on how to talk about race. And how the valuable information shared by people of color would then likely be taken and used (appropriated) while they would not be included in the presentation.

After I was confronted with how I was being dangerous, I immediately experienced a gut punch physical reaction, followed by defensiveness (“But we were only trying to take the onus off BIPOC to do all the educating!”), confusion (“I thought I was doing something good?!”), and anger (“Well, maybe I should just quit doing this work since I clearly am messing up so badly in my efforts!”).

Fortunately, I managed to keep my mouth shut and do my processing elsewhere until I figured out my stuff. Then I could return to my colleagues and take responsibility for repairing the damage I had done with my white adjacent behaviors.

Finally, I am now getting to the point where I can see my own slips more quickly. I was recently in a Zoom breakout room as part of a creativity workshop. I was chatting with another Asian American woman when suddenly, a third person, a white woman, popped into our breakout room. It came up that the presenter of the workshop was Asian American. “But she doesn't look Asian,” said the white

woman. I found myself saying, “Well, I think she's biracial.” And then the white woman declared, “I guess that's okay... I love Asian food. I love Asian people.” I was speechless; not knowing what to do, I silently prayed for the breakout room time to end. As I continued to internally process that microaggression, I also felt frustrated that it was partially ruining the rest of the workshop for me.

Later, I took the situation to some trusted colleagues, asking them, “What would you have said? What could I have done besides freeze and stop talking?” Their answers were pretty good... I could have said something like “Oh, what do Asians look like?” or “You love ALL Asian people??” or “What you said seems problematic” or even just “Excuse me, what was that?” Now I feel better prepared for the next time someone might say something like this to me. One friend also suggested that I practice saying some of these responses aloud so that I have them well-rehearsed for next time... because we know there will be a next time. Now that the invisible is becoming more visible to me, I need to keep going on my journey to do something besides freeze if I see a microaggression happening.

I continue to be very grateful to my colleagues who give me honest feedback because they know I am trying, even when I mess up. I want to be psychologically healthy, not walking around with toxic white supremacist ideas in my brain ready to pop out and potentially hurt someone.

I don't want to be “dangerous” to anyone anymore.

APRIL 2022



# THE OTHER ONES

By Lee Comic

IG/FB: @theotheronesbylee,

Twitter: @OtherOnesbyLee

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

### *Exciting News!*

DMAA is excited to announce the launch of our new webpage where we hope all AAPA members can find research and resources focusing on the lived experiences of adopted and multiracial Asian Americans. Please check it out [here](#).

We also want to welcome Jess Benson in her new role as Chair-Elect for the division.

### *Recruiting!*

We are currently in the process of recruiting a Secretary/Historian for DMAA. If you or someone you know may be interested, please [contact us](#) for more information. We would love to welcome you to the board!

### *Congratulations!*

Last, but not least, we are proud to announce and congratulate the winners of the 2021-2022 Awards for their research and advocacy works highlighting the experiences of multiracial and adopted Asian Americans. The winners of the award are: Lauren Berger, Emily Hunt, and Mele Kramer! Our next call for submissions will be in August, so please stay tuned!

DMAA IS A GROWING DIVISION! SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. PLEASE CONTACT US AT [DMAA.COMMUNICATION@AAPAONLINE.ORG](mailto:DMAA.COMMUNICATION@AAPAONLINE.ORG)

# D M A A

## S P O T L I G H T

## I N T E R V I E W *by Sue H. Kim, PhD*

I used to think that everyone's family put soy sauce on their spaghetti.

While I was interviewing Dr. Jess Benson (DMAA Chair-Elect) and Molly Sawdy (DMAA Student Representative) about DMAA's accomplishments and plans for the upcoming year, the subject of food naturally came up as well! Jess confessed that her mom, who is originally from Taiwan, had to get creative with her cooking after marrying Jess' dad, a White man with a Scandinavian heritage, and moving to South Dakota. Apparently, her hot dog fried rice recipe is amazing.

Similarly, my German-Swiss mom figured out that my Korean dad would eat spaghetti if she seasoned the spaghetti sauce liberally with soy sauce.

These stories make me wonder: might these unique recipes and different taste combinations give us a fun way of understanding some of the experiences of multiracial Asian Americans?

Besides culinary anecdotes, Jess and Molly were excited to share that the Division on Multiracial and Adopted Asian Americans (DMAA) has expanded its membership substantially this past year, adding

50 new members (17 professionals and 33 students). Their total membership currently is 139.

"DMAA has launched a reboot of its website, which is a good place to highlight what is going on in the division," said Molly, who is a second-year clinical psychology doctoral student at Suffolk University.

Jess, an Assistant Professor of Psychology at St. Olaf College, added that DMAA intends to "really do things to support members," especially since the pandemic has been so challenging for everyone. She stated, "We want to foster more collaboration, help fund and highlight research and projects on multiracial and adopted Asian Americans, and host in-person socials and get-togethers."

They both mentioned how validating it feels to meet once a month for DMAA's Executive Committee, a place where they can all chat and connect on a personal and professional level.

The theme of "not feeling Asian enough" almost always comes up when multiracial and adopted Asian Americans hold an open conversation with each other. As a matter of fact, Molly shared that for the 2021 AAPA convention, they



*Jess Benson, PhD., DMAA Chair-Elect*

held an interactive session on "Insider-Outsider Status: Conducting Research with Adopted Asian Americans and Multiracial Asian Americans" and a poster presentation on "How We Ask Matters: Multiracial and Adopted Asian Americans' Descriptions of Racial and Ethnic Background on Demographic Forms," both of which originated from some discussions that the DMAA Executive Committee had during monthly meetings.

Thinking back on the AAPA convention, I remembered how much I enjoyed the DMAA interactive workshop titled, "Asian Enough: A Space for Dialogue Among Multiracial and Adopted Asian Americans about Unique Positionalities as 'In-between and Invisible' Populations," which was beautifully facilitated by





*Molly Sawdy, DMAA Student Representative*

*Although I later learned that my ability to read non-verbal cues was quite accurate, these childhood experiences definitely registered in my mind as times when I was “not Asian enough”*

Dr. Annabelle Atkin and Dr. Mele Kramer. As a biracial Asian American living and working in New Hampshire, I found it so refreshing and affirming to hear other attendees share what it was like for them to be one of the only people in their area with their unique identity. We were also asked to consider what our experiences had been within the Asian American community, whether we felt accepted and had a sense of belonging, and when we had felt “not Asian enough” or in-between.

Growing up not knowing how to speak Korean, I recalled feeling confused and uncomfortable whenever we visited my Korean relatives in Maryland. I was an anxious kid who preferred to know what was happening, but I couldn't follow the conversations - and it appeared as if my grandmother and aunt were constantly scolding my cousins. Although I later learned that my ability to read non-verbal cues was quite accurate, these childhood experiences definitely registered in my mind as times when I was “not Asian enough” - not even having basic Korean language skills.

Then, in my schools and neighborhoods, which were predominantly White, I typically felt very comfortable with all my White friends - until the unexpected occasions when someone made a comment about my being Asian.

For instance, in second grade, my best friend and I were coming up with CB radio call signs, and she volunteered, “Oh, Sue, your CB call sign can be ‘China Doll.’” In my head I was thinking, “What? But I'm not Chinese? How does this even make sense?” Being suddenly reminded of how I am perceived through the White gaze can be jarring to me even to this day.

Another thing that I've learned over the years is that you know you have “found your people” when you feel comfortable being your whole self--whether sharing your fears and doubts or giggling about funny mishaps and family stories. DMAA offers that home for any AAPA members who want a place to feel understood, connect with others from similar backgrounds, and support each other in a friendly community of psychologists who are adopted and/or multiracial Asian Americans. As Molly stated, “It can be tough to find an academic home where your research/clinical/teaching interests are supported as well as feeling a strong sense of belonging. For me, DMAA has provided just that.”

And when we all someday can meet in person again, I'd like to try Jess' mother's hot dog fried rice recipe. I will bring the soy sauce for the spaghetti! What will you bring?



# THE LASTING IMPACT OF #VERYASIAN

*Interview with Gia Vang and Michelle Li*

by J. Angel Dianna

As members of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community, how many times have we felt like we have had to cater to the dominant culture? Many of us know what Michelle Li was feeling on January 1st, 2022, when a TV viewer called in to her news station and criticized her for talking about the Korean food that she and many people eat for New Year's Day. The caller further stated that Michelle was "being very Asian" and that she "can keep her Korean to herself." In response, Michelle posted a video of her listening to the voicemail on social media with the caption, "I'd love to say something back." This video soon caught the attention of other AANHPIs in the media, including Gia Vang, a TV news anchor in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In solidarity with Michelle, Gia shared her own post about the foods she ate in her Hmong community on New Year's Day with the hashtag, #VeryAsian. This hashtag quickly went viral, with AANHPIs around the world proudly sharing stories of themselves being #VeryAsian.

In February, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet with Gia regarding the Very Asian

Foundation, which grew out of the #VeryAsian movement. Michelle's and Gia's vision for the Foundation is to include all voices of the diverse AANHPI community, especially those who are often left out of the conversation. The Foundation aims to lift such voices up and highlight the joys of being Asian. Towards these ends, Michelle's and Gia's vision includes sharing and raising up diverse voices by using their ever-growing platform for AANHPI storytelling, fundraising for AANHPI organizations, and providing models for AANHPI youth. For example, Gia and Michelle were happy to inform us that they are organizing a book campaign with AANHPI literary scholars, librarians, educators, authors, and students to address and solve the lack of representation in school reading material, partially in response to an incident in Missouri where students brought the lack of AANHPI representation to their school's attention but were subsequently ignored. Gia and Michelle know the power that representation has on adolescents, and this solution-focused approach led by the AANHPI community addresses the systems that perpetuate exclusion.

Gia and Michelle both live in the Midwest, where there is not a large AANHPI community. They see the

*"I ate dumpling soup. That's what a lot of Korean people do."*

*—Michelle Li,  
KSDK News Anchor*

need for young AANHPI people to have communities of other AANHPIs, especially when they might not have many others who identify similarly as them. Moreover, in these times of anti-Asian sentiment, it is integral for AANHPIs to reclaim our identities and celebrate our collective community wealth.

Michelle, as a Korean American, and Gia, as a Hmong American, bring their unique perspectives to the Foundation, and they recognize that they are not perfect. "We need help and we encourage Asian American communities to reach out to us for mutual support," Gia said. "We have been pinned as a group with stereotypes. For example, we don't show emotion or we are hard workers. But the reality is that Asians are exhausted. We see violence in our communities, but mainstream media does not show the public. "Through the Foundation, Gia and Michelle are committed to showing the world that AANHPIs are fully human beings. In addition, in Gia's words, "We want to be good stewards of the Very Asian hashtag." While that comes with a great deal of responsibility, Gia and Michelle also want to have fun with it. They recognize the importance of a sustainable model for the Foundation, which means taking care of themselves and each other. Gia recalled that earlier in her life, she hid her Hmongness/"Asianness" by conforming in school and in her career. She said, "As I got older, I began to realize you can't hide who you are. In fact, those parts I tried to hide made me more unique." Michelle echoed Gia's thoughts and said that she is and will not be ashamed of being a transracial adoptee: "I'm just telling my truth every day. I am proud of being in

my Korean body. I am proud of my white parents. I am proud of my Korean family." Both Gia and Michelle both know that being #VeryAsian means being authentic to who they are. They lean on each other and their community for support in their identities. They also look to what they can give to their children and communities by being their whole, genuine selves. This circle of support bolsters them in achieving their goals for the Foundation.

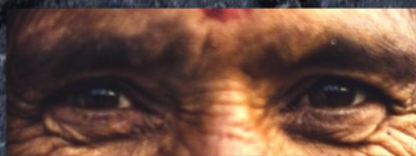
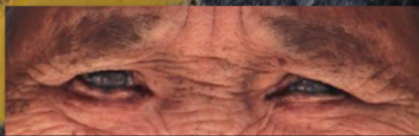
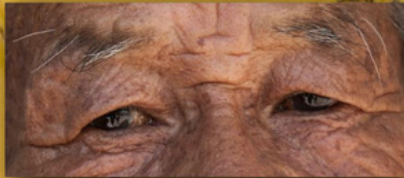
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To learn more about the Very Asian Foundation and provide support, you can visit <https://very-asian.com/>, or follow the Foundation's Instagram (@theveryasianfoundation), Twitter (@theveryasianfdn), Facebook (@veryasianfoundation), and TikTok (@theveryasianfoundation) accounts.

*"As I got older, I began to realize you can't hide who you are. In fact, those parts I tried to hide made me more unique."*

*—Gia Vang,  
KARE 11  
News Anchor*





NOW YOU SEE ME

# NOW YOU SEE ME

## Digital Collage Art by Jacqueline Lopez (2021)

The eyes symbolize the defining physical feature that Asians are often identified by, especially when targeted in acts of racism and discrimination. The eyes are also meant to represent the diversity within the Asian American community and the defiance against the homogeneous Asian stereotype. The yellow-painted pavement symbolizes the racial slur used against Asians, as well as the hate crimes committed against the Asian American community. "Now You See Me" is a validation of our collective pain, suffering, and feelings of being overlooked and invisible. At the same time, it also hopes to assert power and reclaim our value and identity.

## What inspired you to create this piece?

The inspiration to create my first digital art collage titled, "Now You See Me," came as a vision in my mind, where I pictured various Asian eyes looking at me, and I could feel their feelings of fear and rage but also their determination and readiness to fight and resist hate. I felt an unexplainable, strong pull to create this piece, and I didn't even truly process its meaning until I was finished. It was the first time in my own creative process that I could see the finished piece in my mind before I had the words to fully describe it.

## About the Artist

Jacqueline is a first-generation Filipina American who immigrated to the Pacific Northwest from the Philippines over two decades ago. After a decade of community-based work in clinical and social services, she transitioned to a career in research. In these past few years, she has been engaged in mental health and prevention science research, specifically on youth suicide, transition-age foster youth, and on Indigenous spirituality and mental health help-seeking of Filipinos in the U.S. Her particular interests are in integrating spirituality and mental health services, bridging Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology) and Filipino American Psychology, and understanding the role of Indigenous Filipino culture on the ethnic identity development and psychological experiences of Filipinos/Filipino Americans. Jacqueline is a recent graduate of Pacific University in Hillsboro, Oregon, where she obtained her dual master's in Applied Psychological Science and Healthcare Administration. Currently, she works as a research associate in Washington state. Her passions are in advocating for culturally responsive mental health treatment, elevating BIPOC needs and voices, and advancing equity and inclusion.

## Division on SouthEast Asian Americans (DoSEAA) & Division on International Students and Professionals (DoISAP)

Please join us in celebration of the official formation of two new divisions within the Asian American Psychological Association! The DoSEAA and DoISAP are two of nine divisions, which include the Division on Women; the Division on Students; the Division on South Asian Americans; the Division on Filipinx Americans; the Division on Practice; the Division on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning; and the Division on Multiracial and Adopted Asian Americans.

### WHO ARE WE?

#### Division on SouthEast Asian Americans (DoSEAA)

The mission of the DoSEAA is to foster a community of students and professionals committed to promoting the empowerment, visibility, and wellbeing of Southeast Asian Americans (SEAAAs) through greater understanding of the social, cultural, emotional, political, and personal factors that impact the psychology and experiences of SEAAAs. As a division, we aim to:

- ▶ Increase representation and retention of SEAAAs within AAPA and within the mental health field and psychological discipline;
- ▶ Create and nurture a close-knit community of psychology/mental health-oriented students and professionals who are committed to serving routinely neglected Southeast Asian American communities;
- ▶ Intentionally and strategically work to challenge systems of oppression to promote community healing and thriving.

### Meet the DoSEAA co-founders

The formation of DoSEAA was made possible by a dedicated eight-member working group that shares the same commitment and passion towards amplifying the voices and addressing the needs of the growing Southeast Asian population in North America.



**Thanh Nguyen (she/her), MA**  
Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate  
University of Massachusetts Boston

Things I enjoy: "Spontaneous freestyle dance sessions with my toddler, family meals, and potlucks with loved ones."

**Pa Her (she/her), PhD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Things I enjoy: "I love spending time with friends and family, telling stories with my preschooler, and staying active."





**Anne Saw (she/her), PhD**  
 Associate Professor, Clinical-Community Psychology  
 DePaul University  
 Things I enjoy: "Exploring new restaurants and playing Wordle and its many iterations."

**Nellie Tran (she/they), PhD**  
 Associate Professor  
 San Diego State University  
 Things I enjoy: "Food and TikTok!"



**Nancy Truong (she/her), PhD**  
 Clinical Assistant Professor  
 Arizona State University  
 Things I enjoy: "Spending time outdoors/in nature and trying out new restaurants."

**Seint Kokokyi (she/her), PhD**  
 Assistant Professor & Clinical Health Psychologist  
 Dept. of Clinical Health Psychology  
 Max Rady College of Medicine  
 University of Manitoba  
 Things I enjoy: "I enjoy cooking and gardening."



**Uyen Sophie Nguyen (she/her), MA**  
 School Psychology Doctoral Student  
 Fordham University

**Maximilian Tokarsky (he/him), PsyD**  
 Clinical Psychologist of Dayton Ohio

## WHO ARE WE?

### Division on International Students and Professionals (DoISAP)

DoISAP is a community of students and professionals committed to promoting the empowerment, visibility, and wellbeing of Asian Internationals through greater understanding of the social, cultural, emotional, political, and personal factors that impact the psychology of and experiences with their heritages. We define Asian Internationals, but are not limited to 1) students and professionals who came to the United States as non-citizens/non-immigrants; 2) students and professionals who pursued an education outside the United States but are now working in the United States; and 3) students and professionals who had lived experiences outside the United States. DoISAP's mission is a multifaceted representation of Asian ISAPs at local, state, national, and international levels.

As a division, we aim to:

- Provide a validating and inclusive space for Asian ISAPs and their allies, with a particular emphasis on mentoring and supporting the international community;
- Develop and disseminate resources via online platforms to inform international/immigration-affirming policies, practices, and research with this population;
- Advocate for the interests and representation of Asian ISAPs at local, state, national, and international levels.

## Meet the Inaugural DoISAP Executive Committee



DoISAP Chair

Yu Chak Sunny Ho (he/him), PhD

Staff Psychologist

Interconnections Healing Center, PLLC, Seattle, WA

Things I do for fun: "Hiking and watching Netflix shows."

DoISAP Chair-Elect

Pooja Mamidanna (she/her), LMFT

Clinical Psychology Doctoral Candidate

California School of Professional Psychology, SF, CA

Things I do for fun: "Lifting weights, working out, being outdoors in nature, exploring hidden nature spots around the California Bay Area."



DoISAP Treasurer

Akiko Kaji (she/her), PhD

Psychologist

San Francisco Kokoro no Clinic

Things I do for fun: "Dancing and taking photos."



DoISAP Student Representative

Sneha Pimpalkhute (she/her)

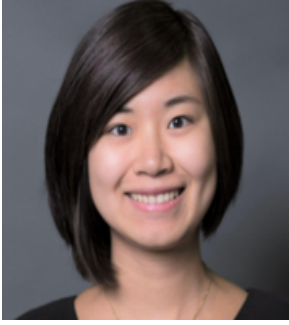
School Psychology Doctoral Student

Georgia State University

Things I do for fun: "Exploring new hiking places, number painting, and searching for new and equally engrossing assignment (as painting by numbers)"







DoISAP Secretary-Historian  
**Chun Tao (she/her), PhD**  
 Clinical Health Psychologist & Assistant Professor of  
 Psychology  
 Mayo Clinic in Arizona  
 Things I do for fun: "Spending time with family, playing  
 board games, and gardening."

DoISAP Communications Chair  
**Shiyu Zhang (she/her), PsyD**  
 Clinical Psychologist  
 North East Medical Services, San Francisco, CA  
 Things I do for fun: "Yoga and hiking."



DoISAP Advocacy and Education Co-Chair  
**Jabeen F. Shamji (she/her), MA, MS**  
 Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student  
 University of North Texas  
 Things I do for fun: "Coloring and taking long walks."

DoISAP Advocacy and Education Co-Chair  
**Sukanya Ray (she/her), PhD**  
 Associate Professor in Psychology  
 Suffolk University, Boston, MA

Her research interests include Asian mental health risks,  
 health disparities, post-traumatic growth, leadership values,  
 and utilization of alternative healthcare practices.



We are excited to have DoSEAA and DoISAP as our newest divisions within  
 AAPA. If you would like to join and be in community with these divisions, please  
 email [membership@aapaonline.org](mailto:membership@aapaonline.org)

For more information on DoSEAA and DoISAP, contact  
[info.doseaa@gmail.com](mailto:info.doseaa@gmail.com) and/or [doisap.cochairs@gmail.com](mailto:doisap.cochairs@gmail.com)

# fun stuff!

take a break.

## SUDOKU

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9	4	7	2	3	8	5	6	1

## MUSIC & MEDIA



A brief sampling of music by AAPI artists based on recommendations from the AAPA community.

Have any media recommendations for the next newsletter? Submit them here.

# Meet the Team: Co-Editors-in-Chief

Lauren Yang  
She, her, hers

Lauren is a fifth-year Psy.D candidate in clinical psychology at Yeshiva University. Currently, Lauren works as a Counselor Intern at Counseling and Psychological Services for San José State University. Her professional interests include mood disorders, life transition challenges, interpersonal relationship concerns, and multiethnic/cultural identity development. As a mental health advocate with lived experience, she also serves as Vice Chair of the Young Adult Council for the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. Originally from Orange County in Southern California, Lauren is a second-generation Korean and Filipina American with much love for karaoke, Broadway musicals, and mochi donuts.



Uyen Sophie Nguyen  
She, her, hers

Sophie is a third-year Ph.D. student in School Psychology at Fordham University. She has a Master's in Education and Social Policy from New York University. Her professional interests include developing and providing culturally-sensitive, two-generational supports for immigrant and low-income families. She is also interested in working with children with special needs and bridging the mental health services gap for traditionally underserved populations. Sophie is a first-generation Vietnamese immigrant. In her free time, she enjoys reading, meditating, and spending time with friends and family.



# Columnists/Reporters

J. Angel Dianna  
She, her, hers

Angel is a mental health counselor in North Carolina. She is also a doctoral student at UNC Greensboro's Counseling and Counselor Education program. In her role as a columnist for the AAPA newsletter, Angel shares AAPI stories to foster connections and community. Her hobbies include horseback riding, cross stitching, and exploring new places.



Sue H. Kim  
She, her, hers

Sue is a licensed psychologist in solo private practice in rural southwestern New Hampshire, providing therapy for adolescents and adults struggling with anxiety, depression, and trauma. Sue's dad is from Korea (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 is excited to be a new contributor to the AAPA newsletter this year! Sue loves dark chocolate and makes a point of eating it daily.

Nicole R. Benquechea  
She, her, hers

Nicole graduated from California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA) in May 2020 with a Master of Arts degree in Psychology with the advisement of Dr. Heidi Riggio, Professor of Psychology at Cal State LA. Lauren has many identities: She is a first-generation student, a daughter, and an advocate for mental health, to mention a few. Currently, Nicole is involved with the Center for Educational Improvement as a social media specialist and is an Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) scholar in the 2021-2022 Cohort. As a first-generation student, she had to build her Comunidad to succeed and find her place at the table. Nicole got here with the love and support of family, the guidance of mentors, and her strong network of colleagues. In her free time, Nicole enjoys reading books and listening to music. She is eager to join the Newsletter team, help her colleagues and be part of a wonderful group of individuals.



# Copy Editors

Linda Zheng  
She, her, hers

Linda is a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Psychological Science program (clinical counseling track) at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. She completed her undergraduate studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Linda's interests include trauma, resilience, culturally responsive, trauma-informed care, health equity, and the wellbeing of individuals with historically marginalized identities. She enjoys drawing, reading, music, cooking, and yoga.



Sheela Kamath  
She, her, hers

Sheela is a registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist and registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor in the San Francisco East Bay Area. She has experience working at a PHP and IOP, public and nonpublic schools, and a county Behavioral Health Court. As a 1.5-generation Indian-American woman, Sheela is building an integrative practice that is trauma-focused, culturally inclusive and affirming, and rooted in social and racial justice. Her clinical interests include anxiety and mood disorders, complex trauma, family and relationship issues, immigration and acculturation, mindfulness-based approaches, personality disorders, and chronic mental illness. She earned her MA in counseling psychology from The Wright Institute in Berkeley, CA. In her free time, Sheela can be found reading, meditating, playing with her chonky pug mix Stringer Bell, and eating all the baked goods.



Bryce Nguyen  
She, her, hers

Originally from Hanoi, Vietnam, Bryce completed her BA degree in East Asian Studies and Psychology at Dartmouth College. Currently, she is pursuing an MA in General Psychology at The New School for Social Sciences. In her free time, Bryce enjoys taking naps with her cat, creative writing, and watching historical documentaries.



# Copy Editors (cont.)

Darcy Ing  
She, they

A licensed psychologist in Hawaii with experience in working with individuals, couples, and families, Darcy does psychological assessments for clergy, continuing education on pastoral care and counseling for Buddhist and Christian clergy, and workshops for the general public on mental health issues such as depression and suicide.



Lydia Si-Ngaw Lui  
She, they

Lydia is a new AAPA member and first-year graduate student at the University of Minnesota, where she is pursuing an M.A. in clinical mental health counseling. Lydia's primary goal is to help people from marginalized communities. She is also a licensed attorney and professional violinist, with degrees from the University of Michigan, University of Southern California, and William Mitchell College of Law. A few memorable experiences in her life has been performing with Yo-Yo Ma, Luciano Pavarotti, Seiji Ozawa, and The Who. In her free time, Lydia loves traveling, photography, soccer (football), and women's sports.

Linh-Nhu Hoang  
She, her, hers

Linh-Nhu recently graduated with her master's degree in counseling psychology and is working towards being a Limited License Psychologist in the state of Michigan. She is currently working as a psychological testing administrator at a pediatric clinic while also assisting in a research lab at her alma mater. Linh-Nhu's clinical and research interests include examining culturally-responsive assessments and interventions for racial and ethnic minorities, intersectionality between multicultural factors and interpersonal relationships for minority youth, and co-occurring disorders within the pediatric population. As a newer member of AAPA, Linh-Nhu hopes to continue volunteering for events and committees to stay connected to those with the same interests in psychology and minority health and mental health. In her leisure time, Linh-Nhu enjoys exercising, reading, watching shows, eating, and spending time with her loved ones.



# Layout

Aida Irving  
She, her, hers

Aida recently moved to Brooklyn, NY in the fall after graduating from Lewis and Clark College, where she received a BA in English Literature based on her passion to story tell. Some of her favorite books are Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Lauren Groff's *Florida*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. As a Kazakh adoptee, Aida hopes to get in touch with her heritage and promote health and acceptance in the Asian American community, especially for individuals who come from an interracial background similar to her.



Vera Karlotta Heffner  
She, her, hers

Vera nerds out about many things—Harry Potter, design, linguistics, and cross-cultural dynamics being among them. She is a Clinical Mental Health Counseling student and the Officer for Diversity and Inclusion at Denver Seminary and hopes to promote wellness in the Asian-American community by integrating a bioecological perspective across the lifespan in therapy. As a second-generation Filipino-American, she is interested in individualistic versus interdependent self-concepts and aspires to study how variations in self-construals affect relationship dynamics.



Benjamin Conner  
He, him, his

Benjamin was born in Incheon, South Korea, and was adopted when he was five months old. He is currently a senior at Bates College majoring in Psychology and minoring in Music. His research interests include counseling and liberation psychology, as well as music therapy. In his free time, Benjamin enjoys skateboarding, playing the guitar, and graphic design.

