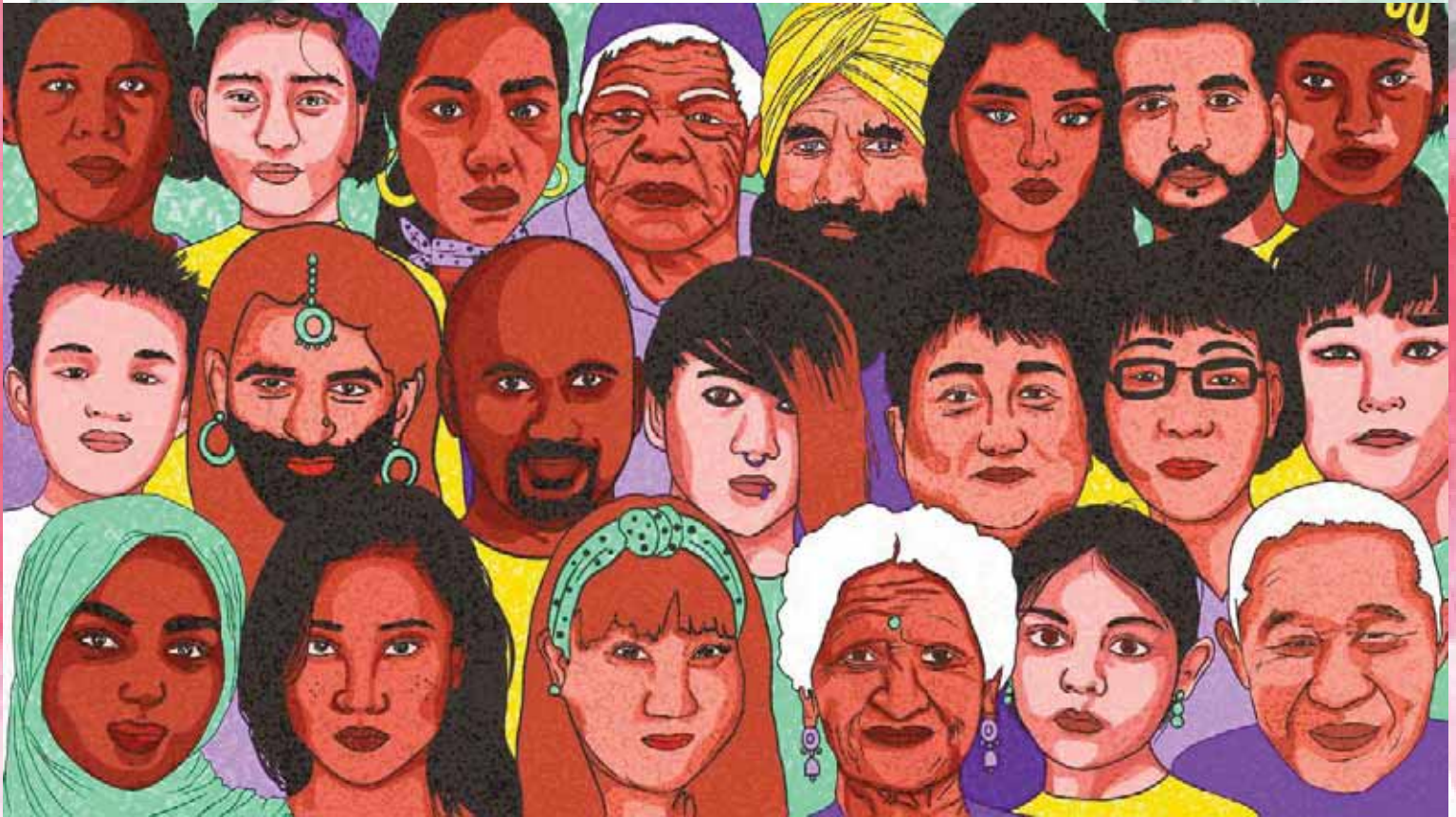


DiversiTea

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

A Diversity Club and Diversity & Inclusion Committee Newsletter

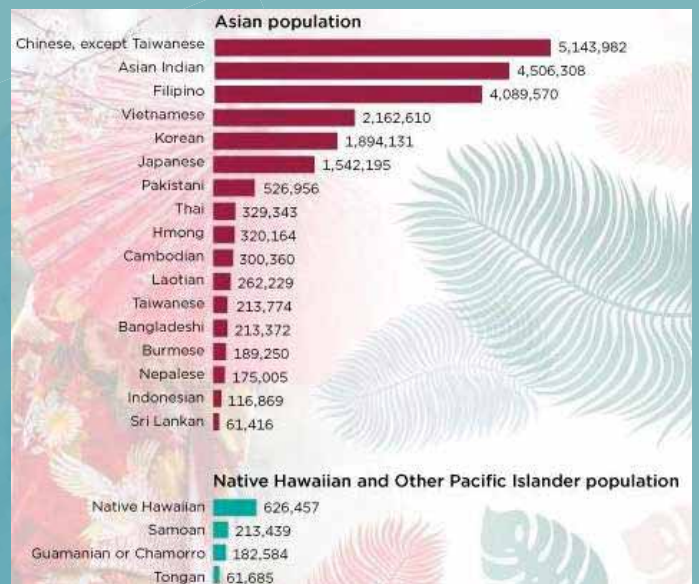


***National AAPI Heritage Month** calls upon us to recognize, listen, and learn about the heritage, stories, and diversity within the AAPI community and pays tribute to Asians and Pacific Islanders who have enriched America's history.*

BY THE NUMBERS...

- **22.6 million** Asian residents in the US (2018)
- **555,262** estimated number of Asian-owned employer firms in the US (2016)
- **5,157** estimated number of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-owned employer firms in the US (2016)

US AAPI POPULATION



source: US Census Bureau (2018); community survey



GOLD HOUSE'S 2021 A100 LIST

Gold House is the premier nonprofit collective of Asian founders, creative voices, and leaders dedicated to unifying the world's largest populace - Asians and Pacific Islanders - to enable more authentic multicultural representation and societal equity. Their A100 List honors the most impactful AAPIs in culture every May for AAPI Heritage Month. This year, they honor both excellence in achievement and eminence in activism.



THE DIVERSE AAPI EXPERIENCE

AAPI dreams are dynamic, multifaceted, and heterogeneous. Great Big Story takes a trip from Hawaii to Los Angeles to New York City to meet a hula champion living out a childhood dream, a kitchen team bringing authentic Indian cuisine housed from a gas station, a rapper challenging stereotypes, and performers keeping a Tang Dynasty-era tradition alive.

THE DONUT KING'S AMERICAN DREAM

The Donut King is a documentary about Ted Ngoy - a refugee who escaped Cambodia, arrived in the US in 1975, and built an unlikely multi-million-dollar donut empire. Ngoy sponsored hundreds of visas for incoming refugees and helped them get on their feet by teaching them the ways of the donut business. By 1979, he was living the American Dream, but that's only the beginning of the story...



THE MYTH OF THE MODEL MINORITY



The term “Yellow Peril” originated in the 1800s, when Chinese laborers were brought to the US to replace emancipated Black communities as a cheap source of labor. Chinese laborers made less than their white counterparts, and also became victims of racist backlash from white workers who saw them as a threat to their livelihood. This fear led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first law to restrict immigration based on race.

Amid worries that the act would hurt an allyship with China in the war against imperial Japan, the Magnuson Act was signed in 1943, allowing for selective recruitment of highly educated Asian immigrants. This move strategically recast the Chinese as law-abiding, peace-loving, courteous people living quietly among us.

During WWII, the media created the idea of the model minority, stating that the Japanese were rising up out of the ashes after being held in internment camps, and it was immediately used as a reflection against Black people. This makes a flawed comparison between Asian Americans and Black Americans to argue that racism, including more than two centuries of Black enslavement, can be overcome by hard work and strong family values. The myth was used by politicians to undercut Black racial justice movements.

Not only does such a myth create a monolithic identity for Asian Americans and render their struggles invisible, but it also drives a wedge between them and other communities of color, primarily Black Americans, because it uses perceived Asian American “success” to invalidate claims of inequality toward non-white Americans. It also reinforces a structure in which assimilation into white society is the primary goal for other ethnic groups. Retiring this antiquated and harmful concept of Asian Americans being the model minority has been long overdue.

THE LACK OF AAPI REPRESENTATION IN FILM

A recent study published by the University of Southern California’s Annenberg Inclusion Initiative found that just 5.9% of speaking characters in film roles across the 1,300 top-grossing films from 2007–2019 went to AAPI actors. This falls short of the 7.1% of Americans who identify as AAPI.

Of those 1,300 films, only 44 depicted an AAPI lead or co-lead. In 14 of those films, that lead or co-lead was Dwayne Johnson, meaning he accounted for nearly one-third of AAPI lead roles in top films for 13 years. Only 6 of those 44 films had female leads or co-leads. White male actors outnumbered all AAPI actors 15.3 to 1.

In 2018 and 2019, nearly half of the top 200 grossing films had either no AAPI characters at all or those who were given just 5 lines or less. In the top films from 2019, 67% of AAPI characters reflected dated stereotypes and tropes, while 30% were isolated and tokenized. 25% of primary and secondary AAPI characters in 2019 died by the end of the film and 41.8% experienced disparagement of some kind.

The issue extends behind the scenes as well. In the top 1,300 films from 2007 to 2019, AAPI creators made up just 3.5% of directors, 2.5% of producers, 3.3% of casting directors, and 2.9% of creative roles overall behind the camera.

100 YEARS OF AAPI REPRESENTATION IN TV AND FILM



Despite the disparities that exist for AAPIs in Hollywood, it is important to celebrate the contributions AAPI actors have made on the screen. A video by Character Media (left) highlights 100 years of AAPI representation in TV and film.

THE SIX: THE UNTOLD STORY OF RMS TITANIC'S CHINESE PASSENGERS



Among the 700 survivors of the RMS Titanic's sinking were a group of 6 Chinese men. The rescue of one of those men, Fang Lang, who clung onto a wooden door until help arrived, inspired the famous scene in *Titanic* (1997). Upon arriving safely in Ellis Island, they were met with hostility and barred entry into the US because of the Chinese Exclusion Act. They were smeared in the press, with false claims that they used shady tactics to survive, and their stories were lost in time. Executive produced by James Cameron, this [documentary](#) seeks to uncover their stories over 100 years after the ship went down. They track down their descendants, their histories, and touch on a tale beyond the Titanic, a story shaped by racial discrimination and anti-immigration policy that has taken on particular resonance today following recent anti-AAPI abuse in the US.



REMEMBERING THE CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS

On May 10, 1869 in Promontory, UT, the inauguration ceremony of the Transcontinental Railroad took place. The famous photograph commemorating the celebration (above left), however, did not include a majority of the workers who made the railroad possible. About 15,000 Chinese immigrants - up to 90% of the workforce on the Central Pacific Line, were openly discriminated against, vilified, and largely forgotten.

At the centennial celebration in 1969, the President of the Chinese Historical Society was nudged off the list of speakers and the Transportation Secretary, John A. Volpe, failed to mention the Chinese workers. He famously asked, "Who else but Americans could have laid 10 miles of track in 12 hours?"

But on the [150th anniversary celebration](#) on May 8, 2019, Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao, the first person of Chinese descent to hold the position, paid tribute to the railroad's diverse work force - Chinese and Irish immigrants, Civil War veterans, Mormons, African-Americans, and Native Americans. Thousands gathered to celebrate and recognize a more complete picture of the monumental feat (above right).

Historical AAPs



Anna May Wong (1905-1961) Hollywood's First Asian American Movie Star

Growing up in the Chinatown area of Los Angeles, CA, Anna May Wong landed her first leading role at age 17 in *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), one of the first movies made in Technicolor. In addition to being typecast into supporting or stereotypical Asian characters throughout her career, she was infamously passed up for the lead role in *The Good Earth* (1937), a film about Chinese farmers. Instead, the female lead of O-Lan went to Luise Rainer, a white woman, who eventually won the Oscar for Best Actress for her portrayal of an Asian woman. Wong became the first Asian American to lead a US television show for her work on *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong* (1951). Recognized for her roles in silent and talking films, television, and stage in the US and internationally, her legacy continues to influence entertainers around the world.

Larry Itliong (1913-1977) and Philip Vera Cruz (1904-1994) Filipino Labor Leaders and Civil Rights Activists

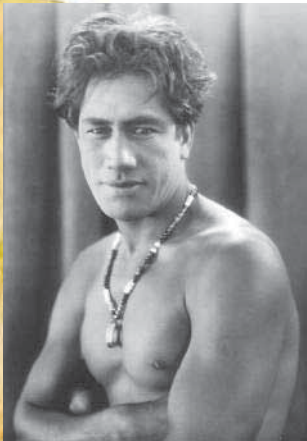
Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz co-founded the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), which later merged with Cesar Chavez's National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) to become the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC). All three men, through UFWOC, led the charge to improve the terrible working conditions for migrant workers, especially Filipino and Mexican farmworkers. In the Grape Strike and Boycott of 1965, they organized a 300 mile pilgrimage from Delano, CA to Sacramento, CA. Their efforts brought an end to several unfair labor practices, and the leadership of UFWOC changed its name to what it is now recognized as - the United Farm Workers (UFW) Union.



Duke Kahanamoku (1890-1968)

Native Hawaiian Surfer and Olympic Gold Medalist Swimmer

Nicknamed "The Big Kahuna," Duke Kahanamoku was a towering figure in the worlds of sports and entertainment. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, he was a 5-time Olympic medalist in swimming - including 3 gold medals, having competed in the 1912, 1920, and 1924 Olympics. At the 1912 Olympics, he had set the world record for the 100m freestyle. Following his trail-blazing athletic career, Kahanamoku worked as an actor, sheriff, and surfer, helping to popularize the Hawaiian sport of surfing to a new generation of surfers all over the world. In 1966 he became the first person to be inducted into both the Swimming and Surfing Halls of Fame. In 1984, he was posthumously inducted into the US Olympic Hall of Fame.



Patsy Takemoto Mink (1927-2002)

First Asian American Woman Elected to Congress

Patsy Takemoto Mink became the first Japanese-American woman to practice law in her home state of Hawaii, the first woman of color elected to the House of Representatives, and the first Asian American woman to serve in Congress. Representing Hawaii from 1965-1977 and 1989-2002, she traveled back to Hawaii from Washington, D.C. every other week to make sure she was connected to the issues and concerns of the Hawaiian people. She co-authored Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination. In addition to writing bills like Title IX, the Early Childhood Education Act, and the Women's Educational Equity Act, Mink was the first Asian-American to run for US President.



Champions of Diversity



Kelly Marie Tran

Pushing the Boundaries of Asian Representation in Hollywood

Kelly Marie Tran is a Vietnamese-American actress whose parents were refugees from Vietnam. She won the role of a lifetime when she was cast as Rose Tico in the film *Star Wars: Episode VIII - The Last Jedi* (2017). Unfortunately, the film divided obsessive fans, and Tran, as the franchise's most prominent newcomer and first woman of color in a lead role, was attacked on the Internet with racist and sexist insults. After withdrawing from the spotlight altogether for some time, she was cast as Disney's first Southeast Asian princess in *Raya and the Last Dragon* (2021), the first Disney animated film to be directly inspired by Southeast Asian cultures. Tran is championing her role as a symbol of representation, and isn't letting anyone else stop her.

Alok Vaid-Menon

Writer, Performance Artist, and LGBTQIA+ Rights Advocate

Alok Vaid-Menon is a child of Malayali and Punjabi immigrant parents from Malaysia and India. They are gender non-conforming and use poetry, prose, comedy, performance, fashion design, and portraiture to explore themes of gender, race, trauma, belonging, and the human condition. They are the creator of #DeGenderFashion, a movement to degender fashion and beauty industries. Vaid-Menon is the author of *Femme in Public* (2017) and *Beyond the Gender Binary* (2020). They have been honored in NBC's Pride 50 and Out Magazine's OUT 100 in 2019, Business Insider's Doers in 2020, and HuffPost's Culture Shifters in 2021. They work as a continual advocate and organizer to raise funds for social justice campaigns, often centered on the livelihoods of trans folks of color.



Younghoe Koo

Korean-American NFL Comeback Kicker

Younghoe Koo is a kicker for the Atlanta Falcons and the 4th overall player in NFL history to have been born in South Korea. Following his collegiate football career, he went as an undrafted free agent in the 2017 NFL draft and signed with the Los Angeles Chargers. After being let go following his first month of play, he made his way to the Falcons in 2019. Koo was the NFL's leading scorer of 2020 with 144 total points scored. He was named November 2020's Special Teams Player of the Month, and in December of 2020, he was selected to his first Pro Bowl at only 26 years old. He is helping to pave the way for future generations to see themselves finally represented in top-tier athletic competition.



Tammy Duckworth

Asian American Woman of Many Congress Firsts

Tammy Duckworth, Illinois Senator and retired National Guard Lieutenant Colonel, is responsible for an impressive list of firsts. She's the first Congress member to be born in Thailand, the first Senator to give birth while in office (at the age of 50!), the first Asian American woman to represent Illinois's Congress, and the first woman with a disability to be elected to Congress. She lost both of her legs following a helicopter attack in the Iraq War. "People always want me to hide it in pictures," she told Vogue in 2018. "I say no! I earned this wheelchair. It's no different from a medal I wear on my chest. Why would I hide it?"



lasting Impacts

Anecdotes about times you have felt connected to or welcomed into AAPI culture



"Asian food has always been a large part of my life and a huge part of AAPI culture. For many Asian families, food was a way of showing love, celebrating, and connecting to your roots. From the home cooked meals that I grew up eating to the Asian restaurants that my friends and I would frequent, there was always a sense of nostalgia and comfort in those dishes. When I first came down to Durham, the Asian food scene here was lacking compared to that in Boston and New York, but I was determined to see what Durham had to offer. I asked around for the best Asian restaurants nearby and got some recommendations. I also found out there was an Asian supermarket, LiMings, in Durham and H Mart in nearby Cary. Going to those supermarkets brought me back to childhood where I would go to Chinese supermarkets and fill the shopping cart full of snacks and candies. After browsing the aisles, I was starting to feel homesick, and I made it a goal to cook more Asian dishes. One dish that is simple but brings me back to breakfast at home is congee. Whenever I go back home for break, I ask my mom to make this dish. It is simple, easy to make, and does not require many ingredients. To make it you just need rice, water, and side dishes you can get at the supermarket. The side dishes that I normally eat with congee are steamed eggs, canned fried dace, century egg, and bamboo shoot in chili oil. Last year, I would celebrate a long week by making this on the weekend and having it for breakfast. For those who are interested in making congee, here is a simple [recipe](#).

"This year, Asian small businesses took a hit. People avoided Asian restaurants because coronavirus was labeled a Chinese virus. Many family-owned restaurants that have been around for decades were forced to permanently close their doors due to xenophobia. These restaurants carried family recipes that have been passed down for generations, have been totems in their communities, and have a footprint in the history of Asians in America. To combat the closure of these businesses, the younger generation of Asian Americans have taken to social media to promote these businesses started and run by the older generation. When I saw the Instagram account @sendchinatownlove and others similar to it I felt proud of my community. I made it a point to go to Chinatown every time I went back home to support these businesses."

- Second Year Daniel Chen

lasting Impacts

Anecdotes about times you have felt connected to or welcomed into AAPI culture

"There are far too many examples in my life to be able to choose a single one of the times I have been impacted by members of the AAPI community. As a child, my Japanese neighbors had two children the same age as my brother and me, and we spent hours each day dashing back and forth between our houses. They were the first 'neighbor friends' I had ever had, and they taught me to take my shoes off inside, and how to use chopsticks, and in the way that children do, we loved each other simply for existing.

"Right before college I had the opportunity to take a class on orphan care and advocacy in China. I spent most of the time in a 'special-needs orphanage,' where I got to interact daily with the women from the community who chose to serve as caretakers for dozens of children each day.

Towards the end of the class one woman came to talk to us about her experience as a mother herself who helps care for children that are most often abandoned. Her description of the circumstances that would drive a mother to leave her child outside the facility drastically changed my framework for considering such situations. She called our attention to the reality that in many cases the mothers consider that to be the most loving thing they can do for their child to ensure that they would receive the life-saving care it needed since the government was paying all the expenses for the children. I am forever indebted to her for helping me broaden my perspective to consider what drives a person to do something, rather than drawing all my conclusions from my own perspective.

"Here at Duke I have had the experience of learning so much from my AAPI classmates. Long walks and late night conversations about holding on to your culture, maintaining family history, the significance of traditions, the beauty of names, geo-political influences, family relationships separated by oceans or by languages, and so much more, have constantly broadened my perspective on the experience of my dear friends. I am overwhelmingly grateful for the opportunity I have had to learn from them, and to celebrate all the things that make us different and the same."

- Anonymous

"After embarking on a major transition in my life amidst a time of incredible social isolation, I realized how incredibly proud and grateful I am for my AAPI identity and Filipino heritage. It is because of my identity that I have been able to forge connections and find a sense of community, both here at Duke and in the Triangle area. I have been able to find an incredible mentor at Duke DPT who supports me both academically and personally (shoutout to Dr. Canizares!). I have found friendship in people who understand who I am and my upbringing without explanation, both within DPT and amongst other programs. But even beyond Duke, I have found ways to reconnect to my home and to my culture. It's in the small moments - like reminiscing over the taste of fresh pan de ubes with a local baker, or being asked, 'Pinoy ka ba?' in public - that I feel an immense sense of community and gratitude for who I am and where I have come from."

- *First Year Maybelle Singson*

"My grandma grew up with my family. In fact, my grandma and I shared the same room until I was in 8th grade. She was born in India and taken out of school in second grade. She moved to the United States when her husband died and started living with the eldest family member. This is common in our culture - for the kids to invite their parents to grow old in the comfort of their home. I would ride the bus everyday and my grandma would go on a walk everyday to battle her health conditions. She would walk in traditional Indian clothes and the kids (my friends too) would break out in laughter making fun of her clothes. Being one of the only South Asian students at my school, it was easy to get targeted in bullying due to my differences. I felt ashamed and embarrassed to be the way I was, and for what reason? These people couldn't even begin to understand where I am from and how I grew up. After hiding from who I was, I began to own it, accept it, and go back to being proud of it. I took this as an opportunity to teach others about differences and understanding, but it's hard when people don't give each other a chance."

- Anonymous

lasting Impacts

Anecdotes about times you have felt connected to or welcomed into AAPI culture



"I was able to be immersed in AAPI culture during my time in Taipei, Taiwan. I was fortunate to spend 3 weeks over there for a study abroad experience.

Aside from schoolwork we had many opportunities to travel across the country to learn more about popular sports, activities, music, food, etc. The students at the university that we were staying at really opened up their lives to us and showed us so many exciting things about their culture. I would have to say my favorite experiences were being able to explore a Taiwanese night market and spending time learning about popular sports such as wushu, archery, and judo. I grew such an appreciation for Chinese/Taiwanese culture in just those 3 short weeks and I will be forever grateful for it."

- Second Year Gabrielle Lauderdale

"The events of the past year have been a stark reminder of the immense privilege I have as a white-passing, half-Korean girl. I've lost count of the number of times I have been asked the infamous 'What are you?' question, among other microaggressions, but I have never personally had to fear outright discrimination or racism based off of my appearance. And although I am in a unique position to recognize this privilege, I still feel the consuming fear and anxiety for my family and AAPI friends. Growing up, I always felt that I had to choose to be one side or the other: more Korean, or more Caucasian. Truthfully, it was only recently that I've come to accept both sides of myself simultaneously and be at peace with my identity as a half-Korean woman. I attribute a large part of this growing acceptance to my AAPI friends that I've made at Duke - never once have I felt the need to defend my 'Korean-ness' to them, but instead I have gotten to share about similar childhood experiences within our respective Asian upbringings. Even the simple act of being asked if I wanted to write for this month's AAPI DiversiTea issue was incredibly meaningful; in the past, I've doubted my role within AAPI groups because I wasn't sure if my perspectives or my experiences were ever 'enough.' I'm so grateful for all of my friends at Duke for helping me feel a true sense of belonging and helping me appreciate the beauty of being raised in two cultures that have helped shape who I am today."

- Second Year Grace Ditzenberger

"Growing up, my Filipino immigrant parents raised me to be American. I imagine it was in order to allow me to be more 'assimilated' and less likely to face discrimination. They never taught me Tagalog, we ate Filipino food now and again but mostly had American food, and I never learned much about Filipino culture. Especially compared to my older cousins who could all at least understand Tagalog, I felt inadequate - like I wasn't really Filipino, like I was disconnected from my own culture. It wasn't until my first year of undergrad when I became involved with the very large Filipino student organization on campus that a shift started happening. I met a diverse group of Filipino students - ranging from immigrants from the Philippines to people like me who had struggled with their Filipino identity. I chose to participate in the annual Filipino cultural night as a part of two traditional dance routines in order to learn more about what being Filipino meant. After months of practices, the night of the show I remember feeling exhilarated. Standing on that stage made me realize that there is no one way of being Filipino. There is not a checkbox of requirements that you need to meet to be considered Filipino enough. I was enough. I always had been."

- Second Year Pia Salcedo

lasting Impacts

Anecdotes about times you have felt connected to or welcomed into AAPI culture

"Being mixed race – half Filipina and half German, it was difficult at times finding my identity when I was growing up. When someone would ask me, 'Oh hey, where are you from?' I'd usually pause, and say something like, 'I'm from Miami, but I'm not Latina. My mom is actually from the Philippines and my dad is from Germany.' Growing up in Miami and not speaking Spanish was confusing for a lot of people I'd meet, which is also why I'd answer this way. It was a lot feeling like I had to explain that I'm half Filipina, half German, but also American because I was born in Miami. So, finding a community where I felt I like fit in has been tough for me. Last October, I was invited to join a Zoom meeting to celebrate Filipino American History Month and to connect with other Filipino Duke DPT students and alumni. This was so fun because I didn't even know that there were other students in the DPT program other than myself and the one other person in my class. During the Zoom, we briefly talked about what we all were currently doing and then just told funny stories about growing up with our Filipino parent(s). It was so nice to connect with others with no judgement or worrying if I was Filipina enough. Several others on the meeting were mixed race too! I felt so welcomed and proud of my Filipina culture. Since the Zoom meeting, I've embraced my Filipina heritage and it's been really fun asking my mom and grandmother about our family in the Philippines. If anyone is interested in hearing similar funny stories about growing up with a Filipino parent, watch this [YouTube video](#)!"

- Second Year Jenni Heinser

"During my undergraduate years, I wanted to be involved and stay connected with my Asian heritage on campus where the school's population was predominantly white. I had to seek out any Asian organization I could find as a freshman. Excitedly, I found a few and joined a couple – one being a Japanese-American club and the other being a general Asian-Pacific Islander club; however, it was the Japanese-American club that was the most impactful and where I really felt welcomed into the AAPI culture. Though it was Japanese-American club, it didn't feel like it. It didn't matter that I was half Indian and half Taiwanese. I was brought in like I was family. We had this intrinsic connection as if we were lost siblings. Our upbringings were similar, we had the best Asian foods, the same values, and our cultures intertwined. We also experienced the same struggles of assimilating to the American culture and trying to 'fit in' but also staying true to who we were and our cultures.

There was an aura of we take care of each other here no matter your background, a mutual understanding of love and respect for one another. You know when you have that feeling of everything feeling right and wanting to stick with it? It was a culmination of those feelings and moments that influenced me to stay involved and take on leadership roles in that organization each year until I graduated. My only hope was that I was able to provide those same experiences to others of feeling connected with one another, our Asian roots, and the AAPI culture, and I hope to find ways in continuing to do so."

- Second Year Avinash Lalchandani

"One of the many beautiful things present in lots of Asian cultures is the multigenerational households. These are common all around the world, but much more prevalent in Eastern nations as well as Asian American communities across the US. In my neighborhood, you would often see grandfathers, parents, and children, all of the same kin, walking around the block, then all return to their shared home. This, to me, has always been a touching moment of humankind. Growing up fully ingratiated in Western culture, where individualism reigns supreme, it never occurred to me to live with not just my parents but my grandparents as well. We were always told to grow up and spread our wings, to put ourselves and our own career paths before family. Yet these numerous neighbors of mine highlighted a counter-culture that could and should be more commonplace in Western communities. Not only are children raised by a village, providing a myriad of teaching lessons and lots of love, but older adults in these multigenerational residences are gifted with respect, independence, and tighter bonds. As a society, we can look to these communities to see how we can improve as sons/daughters, mothers/fathers, and grandparents. As a clinician, we can strengthen our relationship with a patient of AAPI heritage if they mention this as their living situation, inquiring about the unique challenges and benefits associated with this housing style."

- First Year Lucas Saacks