

Statement of solidarity with AAPI • 3/21/2021

We Stand with AAPI

Dear MS 54 Families,

We, the Equity Team at MS54, express our solidarity with the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community within and beyond our school network. We grieve with the families who have lost loved ones in Atlanta in the most recent documented hate crime against people of AAPI descent, and condemn white supremacy along with the systems that enable acts of domestic terrorism. We recognize the importance of contextualizing this tragedy, understanding that the AAPI community, and particularly AAPI women, have needed to fight for safety, civil rights, and equity in America long before the escalated attacks we have recently witnessed throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

In generating and distributing this resource, we aim to translate alliance into action and amplify the voices of Asian Americans who have always been at the forefront of their own civil rights initiatives throughout history and today.

How YOU can support the AAPI community locally within our school:

The Asian American Association, a student-led affinity group at MS54, regularly creates activities and digital content to educate their fellow peers about Asian American culture, identity, and history. Last week, they posted an informative slideshow on their Instagram page in response to the tragedy in Atlanta.

- You can support their work by following them at [@aaazn54](#) and sending supportive messages to the club members
- You can also view some of their relevant YouTube videos that meet this moment:
 - [Week 1 of APAHM: Addressing Hate in the Era of COVID-19](#)
 - [#MORETHANAMASK Campaign](#)

How YOU can interrupt the rise of hate crimes by protecting yourself and others:

- [Speak out](#) against a rising trend of bias and hate crimes towards Asian Americans, including in our own community. If you want data to share, [here is a fact sheet](#).
- [Register for free, online bystander intervention and de-escalation training](#). *Hollaback!* and *Asian Americans Advancing Justice* partner to make this class accessible for all.
- Learn more about [how to recognize a hate crime](#), and [report incidents using this form](#) when you see them.

How YOU can spend to make a difference:

- [Here](#) is a list of 61 organizations that use donations to support AAPI communities. Please, always research carefully before you donate.

- Asian American business owners and restaurateurs [need support](#). Support Asian owned restaurants and businesses!

If you identify as AAPI and want specialized support, here are some services:

- Pro bono legal services can be found [here](#)
- Learn more about culturally competent mental health service options specializing in AAPI communities [here](#) and [here](#)
- Upcoming virtual job fair with Asian American Executive Network [here](#)
- A curated list of TV shows, films, podcasts, and books “for Asian Americans, by Asian Americans” [here](#)

How YOU can learn to make a difference:

If you are looking for literature that reflects Asian and Pacific Islander voices, here are just a few of the many excellent options available:

Young Adult

- *The Astonishing Color of After* by Emily X.R. Pan
- *Internment* by Samira Ahmed
- *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang
- *Love from A to Z* by S.K. Ali
- *Barefoot Gen* series by Keiji Nakazawa
- *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *When My Name was Keoko* by Linda Sue Park
- *Something in Between* by Melissa de la Cruz
- *American as Paneer Pie* by Supriya Kelkar
- *A Place at the Table* by Saadia Faruqi and Laura Shovan
- *We Are Not Free* by Traci Chee
- *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan
- *Starfish* by Akemi Dawn Bowman

Adult/8th Grade +

- *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng
- *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong
- *The Interpreter* by Suki Kim
- *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui
- *My Year of Meats* by Ruth Ozeki
- *Half Gods* by Akil Kumarasamy
- *Crazy Rich Asians* by Kevin Kwan
- *Trust Exercise* by Susan Choi
- *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-sook Shin
- *This Time Will Be Different* by Misa Sugiura

- *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know* by Samira Ahmed

Spoken Word Poems

- Arhm Choi Wild performs [“Story of My Name”](#)
- Kate Hao and Kristen Sze-Tu performs [“Yet Still, I Wait”](#)
- YaYa performs [“Ling Ling”](#)
- Ins Choi performs [“Mine Eyes Are Lean”](#)
- Ramya Ramana performs [“Miss America”](#)
- G. Yamazawa performs [“The Bridge”](#)
- Franny Choi performs [“Choi Jeong Min”](#)

Diversify your Instagram feed by following Asian accounts. Here are a few options:

- [@aaazn54](#) → our official MS54 Asian American Association account
- [@asiansformentalhealth](#) → this account specializes in AAPI emotional wellness
- [@asiansforantiracism](#) → posts to spread awareness and combat racism
- [@stopaapihate](#) → coalition addressing Anti-Asian hate
- [@asianpeers](#) → Asian American donation based peer counselling service
- [@qwavenyc](#) → queer & trans AAPI community
- [@aapiprogressiveaction](#) → AAPI empowerment, progressive activism
- [@teachandtransform](#) → anti-bias, anti-racist, Asian American educator
- [@hateisavirus](#) → nonprofit with a mission to combat hate through AAPI activism

Engaging digital resources for further learning:

- Learn about AAPI history with this interactive timeline: <https://aatimeline.com/>
- <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/> Browse online collections of artwork, audio, and visual resources and also includes online lesson plans on specific themes/topics/events in Asian Pacific American history and culture.
- Learn about the history and harms of the [model minority myth](#) and how it has been used as a wedge between AAPI and Black American communities. More on this [here](#) (varying AAPI author identities writing on the same topic)
- Learn about the tapestry of AAPI communities in the USA through data: <https://aapidata.com/>
- PBS has a wealth of video content. Here are two links with opportunities to learn, which we shared last year in honor of Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month:
 - <https://www.pbs.org/specials/asian-pacific-american-heritage-month/> "Celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month this May and every day with a special PBS collection of stories that explores the history, traditions and culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States." Lots of short videos.
 - <https://www.pbs.org/show/asian-americans/> New critically acclaimed documentary series: "Asian Americans is a five-hour film series that delivers a bold, fresh perspective on a history that matters today, more than ever. As America becomes more diverse, and more divided while facing unimaginable challenges, how do we move forward together?"

Told through intimate personal stories, the series will cast a new lens on U.S. history and the ongoing role that Asian Americans have played."

We hope you find these resources helpful!

- The MS54 Equity Team

**MS54 is committed to providing a learning environment that reflects, supports, and celebrates the diversity of our community, with the belief that all students benefit from diverse, equitable, and inclusive schools and classrooms. The MS54 Equity Team promotes this goal by providing an outlet for community members to share experiences, ideas, and concerns. Throughout the year, the Equity Team will have regular meetings as well as sponsor events. All community members are welcome. For more information, comments, or suggestions, contact equity@ms54pta.org*