

March 22, 2021

Statement of Support

The news this week has been newly filled with heinous examples of hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), and [most recent reports](#) show that the past year has seen thousands of hate crimes against people of Asian descent. As we continue to see these terrible, senseless crimes, we are furious, numb, devastated, unsurprised. Perhaps this is shocking news to some in our community, but to many it is a story passed down from generation to generation, and its base is racism. Racism is in our culture, our organizations, our institutions, our structures, and our community, and it makes all of those things unquestionably worse, with marginalized communities bearing down under its weight. We wish that our words and thoughts would change these situations and keep AAPI members of our community safe, but we know that is not true. The opposite of racism can only be anti-racism, and anti-racism is expressed through action directly in opposition to and with a goal of systematically dismantling racism. Therefore, for the betterment of ourselves, our organization, our community, and for the safety and well-being of the AAPI members of our community, we commit to:

- Doing our own work to review our prejudices and aggressions, and dismantling the things within ourselves and our organization that are racist
- Reviewing materials we use in mentoring to both combat negative AAPI stereotypes, and encourage understanding, empathy, and celebration towards AAPI individuals
- Partnering with and paying local AAPI people and businesses for their services, such as with our partnership at the [Goei Center](#)

This is long-term work that has no short solutions. Will you join us in our commitments to learning, identifying our own bias and prejudice, and supporting our local AAPI community members? As Maya Angelou told us, "Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better, do better." Will you do better alongside us? To take immediate action, consider engaging in one of the following ways:

1. Donate to and/or become involved in the work of local AAPI organizations

- a. Show your support by intentionally seeking out and using your economic power and support at [AAPI owned and operated businesses](#)
- b. [Grand Rapids Asian Pacific Foundation](#)
- c. [GR Asian-Pacific Festival](#)
- d. [Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce \(APACC\)](#)

2. Find ways that you can start or learn more about anti-racism work

- a. [Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit](#)
- b. [Resources Regarding Anti-Asian Violence](#)
- c. [Address Anti-Asian Racism with Students](#)
- d. [How to Talk to Kids about Anti-Asian Racism](#)

3. Encourage understanding, empathy, and celebration towards AAPI individuals

- a. [Japanese-American Internment During WWII description](#) from the History Channel
- b. PBS [Diary from a Japanese-American](#) in an Internment Camp in the US
- c. [25 Books written by AAPI authors](#)
- d. [11 Books that delve into the Asian-American identity and experience](#)
- e. Movies like [The Farewell](#) (available on Amazon Prime) have been highlighted for featuring Asian casts and crew, and have received extensive awards, and [Parasite](#) was the first foreign language film to win Best Picture (both in 2019). Explore how AAPI art and media are finally receiving deserved recognition
- f. Help introduce younger students to diverse Asian American History with this [interactive book](#)
- g. Middle and High School students might enjoy this graphic novel ([American Born Chinese](#)) as a great introduction or space for learning

4. Read the full statement from the Grand Rapids Asian-Pacific Foundation on [The Uprising of Hate Crimes Against the AAPI Community](#) and engage in their action steps

- a. Report an incident: <https://stopaapihate.org/>
- b. Donate to their GoFundMe: gofundme.com/f/stopasianhate-gr-asianpacific-foundation
- c. Educate yourself about the AAPI experience: <https://www.stopasianhate.info/>

We are fully committed to using our resources and platform to combat systemic injustice and advocate for our community.

Respectfully,

The Affinity Mentoring Team