



Asian American LEAD

Youth Leadership, Empowerment, and Development

PRESS RELEASE

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AALEAD Youth Host 4th Annual Asian Pacific American Youth Summit

(Washington, DC) – On August 1, 2015, 98 youth from DC, Maryland, and Virginia attended Asian American LEAD's (AALEAD) 4th Annual Asian Pacific American (APA) Youth Summit held at Walker-Jones Education Campus. High school youth have been planning this Summit all summer as part of their summer programs. The theme that youth chose for this year's Summit was: *Dare to Be Different*. The goal of the Summit was to connect APA youth to different cultures and educate youth by engaging in workshops focusing on Identity, Personal Interests, and Cross-Cultural Collaboration.

The morning started with Executive Director Surjeet Ahluwalia as the keynote speaker welcoming youth. "Youth taking ownership and driving conversations on topics of importance to them – such as identity, stereotypes, and mental health – is what AALEAD strives to accomplish," said Director Ahluwalia.

Throughout the day, youth participated in workshops that emphasized self-empowerment, expression, and identity development. The morning workshops focused on mental health with three different tracks hosted by AALEAD staff, University of Maryland's Filipino Cultural Association (FCA), and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Montgomery County (NAMI). The afternoon track had cross cultural workshops with a drumming empowerment workshop hosted by the Bele Bele Rhythm Collective, a Mock Trial by the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC), and a session on Racial Justice and Intersectionality by The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE).

The evening workshops gave youth opportunities to express themselves artistically with a Martial Arts workshop by Ultimate Eskrima International and a Dance Workshop by Kaution Dance. The evening ended with an amazing talent exhibition showcase by the youth and dance party with music from DJ AAROCK.

The Summit is the only of its kind in the DC metro area in that it is driven by youth from planning and coordination to implementation, with support from AALEAD staff. An attendee from DC, Ellen, said, "I'm here to learn something new that can help me change my life or help me change the lives of other people."

AALEAD thanks all the partners and organizations who hosted workshops, Walker-Jones Education Campus for serving as the host site, and especially the Youth for an amazing Youth Summit. Next year's Youth Summit will be the 5th year and held in Summer 2016.

AALEAD supports low-income and underserved Asian Pacific American youth with educational empowerment, identity development, and leadership opportunities through after school, summer, and mentoring programs.

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