



Asian American and Pacific Islander

School Site Recognition
Toolkit

Edited July 2025

About this Toolkit



This toolkit is intended to provide schools with a yearlong, low-lift resource designed to help school sites celebrate, elevate, and educate around the contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

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Monthly Morning Announcements

Each monthly announcement should include an AAPI-inspired quote and a theme-based message.

Month	AAPI-Inspired Quote	Theme-Based Message
August	"Education is a means of empowerment for our community and our future." – Dr. Erika Lee (historian)	Celebrate Obon Festival – "Obon reminds us to honor our ancestors and the legacies they've left behind. Let's carry those lessons forward with kindness and community."
September	"Learning is an act of love, resistance, and revolution." – Grace Lee Boggs (activist and philosopher)	Mid-Autumn Festival – "During the Moon Festival, families gather to celebrate unity, togetherness, and gratitude. May we reflect those values in our school community."
October	"We are not invisible. Our histories and stories matter." – Dr. Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales (Filipina scholar)	Filipino American History Month – "Let's honor Filipino American history by celebrating resilience, cultural pride, and leadership past and present."
November	"Our light shines brightest when we stand in our truth." – Kal Penn (actor and educator)	Diwali – "Diwali teaches us that light triumphs over darkness. Let's light the way with knowledge, kindness, and hope."
December	"Wisdom grows through reflection and community." – Rev. angel kyodo williams (Zen teacher)	Bodhi Day (Buddhist tradition) – "This month, we recognize the power of wisdom, peace, and compassion as we grow in knowledge."

Monthly Morning Announcements

Month	AAPI-Inspired Quote	Theme-Based Message
January	"Leadership is born when we connect deeply to our values and our people." – Tammy Duckworth (U.S. Senator, Thai-American)	Japanese New Year – "Oshogatsu marks new beginnings and reflection. Let's set goals rooted in care, culture, and courage."
February	"Our histories are woven into the fabric of this nation." – Helen Zia (activist and writer)	Lunar New Year – "Let's honor the many AAPI cultures who celebrate Lunar New Year with joy, family, and hope for the future."
March	"Celebrating culture is an act of resistance and resilience." – Rina Banerjee (artist)	Holi – "This month we celebrate Holi, a joyful reminder of love, renewal, and the colors that make our world vibrant."
April	"We inherit strength from those who came before us." – David Henry Hwang (playwright)	Khmer New Year (Cambodian) – "Khmer New Year reminds us that renewal is a cultural practice. Let's step into spring with community and care."
May	"We are many identities, one community." – Jason Chu (poet and activist)	AAPI Heritage Month – "May is AAPI Heritage Month. Let's amplify the voices, stories, and histories that shape our classrooms and communities."
June	"To live openly is to live freely and fully." – Geena Rocero (Filipina trans rights advocate)	Pride Month/Intersectionality – "Let's celebrate AAPI LGBTQ+ voices and recognize that pride is powerful when it honors all identities."

Monthly Newsletter Communications

Month	AAPI Communication
August	Obon is a Japanese Buddhist festival honoring ancestors, celebrated with lanterns, dances, and family gatherings. It reminds us of the importance of respecting those who came before us and the lessons they passed on. This month, we encourage our school community to honor legacies of kindness, connection, and community.
September	The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as the Moon Festival, is celebrated across East and Southeast Asia. Families gather to share mooncakes and admire the full moon, symbolizing unity and gratitude. Let's reflect these values by nurturing a caring and connected school environment.
October	October is Filipino American History Month, honoring over four centuries of Filipino contributions to the U.S. This month, we celebrate the resilience, cultural pride, and leadership of Filipino Americans past and present. By recognizing these stories, we deepen understanding and inclusivity in our schools.
November	Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists around the world. It symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. This month, let's light the way with acts of kindness, hope, and learning.
December	Bodhi Day marks the day the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Observed in many Buddhist traditions, it is a time for reflection on wisdom, peace, and compassion. We encourage our school community to seek understanding and grow in knowledge together.

Monthly Newsletter Communications

Month	AAPI Communication
January	Oshogatsu, the Japanese New Year, is a time for reflection, family gatherings, and setting intentions for the year ahead. Traditions include special meals and visiting shrines for blessings. Let's start the new year by setting goals rooted in care, courage, and cultural appreciation.
February	Lunar New Year is celebrated in many AAPI cultures, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and more, welcoming a new year with family, food, and festivities. Traditions focus on honoring elders, spreading joy, and wishing prosperity. Let's celebrate together with hope for a bright future.
March	Holi, the Festival of Colors, is a Hindu holiday that marks the arrival of spring and celebrates love, joy, and renewal. It's famous for vibrant color throwing, symbolizing the triumph of good and the beauty of diversity. This month, let's embrace the colors that make our community vibrant and inclusive.
April	Khmer New Year, celebrated in Cambodia and among Cambodian communities worldwide, marks the end of the harvest season and welcomes a new year with water blessings, traditional games, and community gatherings. It reminds us that renewal and community care are cultural practices to carry into spring.
May	May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, a time to recognize and honor the diverse cultures, stories, and contributions of AAPI communities. By amplifying these voices, we build stronger, more inclusive classrooms. Let's commit to celebrating AAPI heritage year-round.
June	June is Pride Month, and we highlight AAPI LGBTQ+ voices to honor the intersections of race, culture, gender, and sexuality. Celebrating these identities reminds us that pride is powerful when it embraces all communities. Let's stand together for inclusivity, equity, and love for every student and family.

Monthly Bulletin Board Themes

Each month, there are ideas for both common area bulletin boards and classroom bulletin boards.

Month	Common Area Bulletin Board	Classroom Bulletin Board
August	<u>"Carry the wisdom of your ancestors with you."</u> – Asian Proverb	<u>Obon Festival: Honoring ancestors through memory and movement</u>
September	<u>"In unity, we find strength."</u> – Yuri Kochiyama	<u>Mid-Autumn Festival: Unity and gratitude under the moon</u>
October	<u>"Filipino history is American history."</u> – Dr. Dawn Bohulano Mabalon	<u>Filipino American History: Leadership, resilience, resistance</u>
November	<u>"Be a light in the world."</u> – Deepak Chopra	<u>Diwali: Celebration of light, learning, and renewal</u>
December	<u>"Peace begins with understanding."</u> – Buddhist Teaching	<u>Bodhi Day: The power of wisdom and compassion</u>



Monthly Bulletin Board Themes

Month	Common Area Bulletin Board	Classroom Bulletin Board
January	<u>"Start the year with intention and honor your journey."</u> – Japanese Proverb	<u>Japanese Oshogatsu: Reflection and renewal</u>
February	<u>"Culture is not a costume, it's a legacy."</u> – Unknown AAPI Student Activist	<u>Lunar New Year: Traditions of joy and renewal</u>
March	<u>"Color your world with compassion."</u> – AAPI Artist Collective	<u>Holi: A celebration of renewal and community joy</u>
April	<u>"Spring into new growth with purpose."</u> – Cambodian American Cultural Center	<u>Khmer New Year: Water blessings and gratitude</u>
May	<u>"We are not a monolith. We are a mosaic."</u> – AAPI Civic Engagement Network	<u>Celebrate AAPI Heritage: From the classroom to the community</u>
June	<u>"Celebrate every part of who you are."</u> – Niko Lim, Queer Filipino Educator	<u>Intersectional Voices: Uplifting AAPI LGBTQ+ narratives</u>



Monthly Certificate Templates

RECOGNIZE

Students and Staff

It's important to ensure that your school or organization takes the opportunity to recognize individuals in your student body and on your staff. When doing monthly recognitions, the same categories should be used each month. See below for example categories.



Certificate Categories

- **Bridge Builder Award** – For someone who fosters cross-cultural understanding and inclusion.
- **Heritage Keeper Award** – For someone preserving, teaching, or celebrating AAPI history or cultural traditions.
- **Rising Voice Award** – For a student or emerging leader uplifting AAPI identity and community.
- **Changemaker Award** – For an individual creating meaningful impact for AAPI communities through action or advocacy.
- **Unity in Action Award** – For a team, club, or school group advancing equity, belonging, or celebration of AAPI contributions.

Each Certificate can and should be personalized and printed with the following information:

- *Recipient's Name*
- *School or Organization*
- *Date*
- *Space for Signatures*

Suggested Reading Lists

TK – 2 Grade

- A Different Pond by Bao Phi
- Eyes That Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho
- Grandpa Grumps by Katrina Moore
- Punky Aloha by Shar Tuiasoa
- The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi

3–5 Grade

- Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
- The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin
- Front Desk by Kelly Yang
- Nim’s Island by Wendy Orr (Pacific Islander setting)
- When You Trap a Tiger by Tae Keller

6–8 Grade

- American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang
- The Best We Could Do (YA graphic memoir) by Thi Bui
- Parachutes by Kelly Yang
- Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo (explores mixed Asian heritage)

9–12 Grade

- Minor Feelings by Cathy Park Hong
- They Called Us Enemy by George Takei
- Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay
- Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo
- All You Can Ever Know by Nicole Chung



Local AAPI Figures

By highlighting local AAPI figures like the ones here, we work towards fulfilling one of the eight outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies teaching: supporting a community focus, outlined in the [California Department of Education's Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum](#).



Connie Young Yu

Chinese Historian and
Author from San Jose



Norm Mineta

Former U.S. Secretary of
Transportation, San Jose
native



Helen Zia

Author and civil rights
activist, Oakland-based
native



**Dr. Dawn Bohulano
Mabalon**

Filipino American
historian from Stockton



Gene Luen Yang

Author of American Born
Chinese, lives in the Bay
Area



Toyo Miyatake

Photographer from the
Japanese internment era



Brandon Lee

Filipino American activist
and environmental justice
advocate in SF

Field Trip Ideas

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS

Around the Bay Area

The best way to help learning come to life is to plan field trips for students. There are many local places that are free or low-cost and teach about AAPI heritage around the San Francisco Bay Area. See examples of locations below:



Bay Area Field Trip Location Ideas

- **“Am I American or Am I Not?” Exhibit** – Curated by the Fred Korematsu Institute and hosted at the SCCOE March 22, 2026–May 17, 2026
- **Japanese American Museum of San Jose** – Focus on local JA history
- **San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin** – Cultural heritage + Obon Festival participation
- **Filipino American History Exhibit at SOMArts** (San Francisco)
- **Angel Island Immigration Station** – Bay Area’s historic immigration site
- **Chinese Historical Society of America Museum** (San Francisco Chinatown)
- **San Jose Japantown** – Self-guided cultural walking tour
- **Sikh Gurdwara San Jose** – Largest Gurdwara outside of India

Thank You

AAPI communities represent a significant portion of Santa Clara County, yet their histories and contributions are often under-recognized. This toolkit helps educators and students build connection, understanding, and pride.

Sites that use the toolkit may submit up to **five honorees** from August to April for recognition at our **County AAPI Heritage Celebration in May**, where honorees will receive VIP access and be publicly recognized.

Thank you for building inclusive learning environments and amplifying AAPI voices year-round.

<Event or Sponsorship Webpage URL >

Phone

+123-456-7890

Email

hello@sccoe.org

Website

www.sccoe.org



BRIDGE BUILDER AWARD

IS AWARDED TO

[Recipient Name]

[SCHOOL NAME]

For being someone who fosters cross-cultural understanding and
inclusion in the [school name] community.

AWARDED ON [DATE]

NAME
TITLE

NAME
TITLE

HERITAGE KEEPER AWARD

IS AWARDED TO

[Recipient Name]

[SCHOOL NAME]

For someone preserving, teaching, or celebrating AAPI history or
cultural traditions in the [school name] community.

AWARDED ON [DATE]

NAME
TITLE

NAME
TITLE

RISING VOICE AWARD

IS AWARDED TO

[Recipient Name]

[SCHOOL NAME]

For uplifting AAPI identity and community in the [school name]
community.

AWARDED ON [DATE]

NAME
TITLE

NAME
TITLE

CHANGEMAKER AWARD

IS AWARDED TO

[Recipient Name]

[SCHOOL NAME]

For being an individual creating meaningful impact for AAPI communities through action or advocacy in the [school name] community.

AWARDED ON [DATE]

NAME
TITLE

NAME
TITLE

UNITY IN ACTION AWARD

IS AWARDED TO

[Recipient Name]

[SCHOOL NAME]

For being a team, club, or school group advancing equity, belonging, or celebration of AAPI contributions in the [school name] community.

AWARDED ON [DATE]

NAME
TITLE

NAME
TITLE

*“Carry the wisdom of
your ancestors with
you.”*

– Asian Proverb



Obon Festival

Honoring ancestors through memory
and movement.



Obon is a Japanese Buddhist tradition to remember and celebrate ancestors. Families light lanterns and perform Bon Odori dances to guide spirits home. It teaches respect for those who came before us and the importance of family connections.





*"In unity, we find
strength."*

– Yuri Kochiyama



Mid-Autumn Festival

Unity and Gratitude Under the Moon



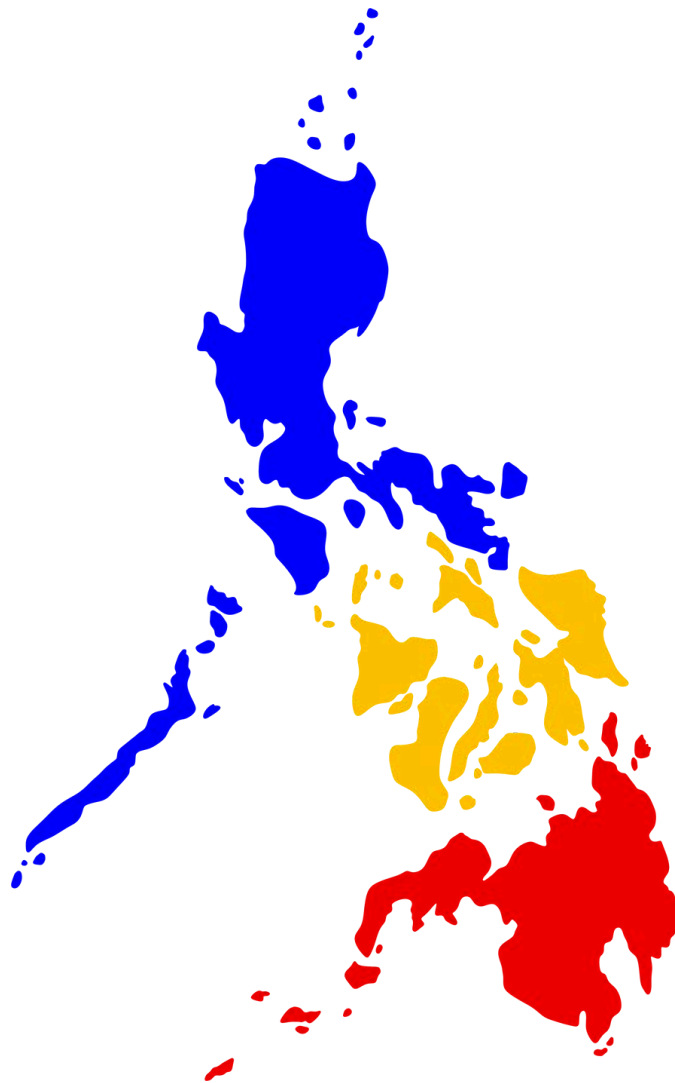
The Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated across East Asia with mooncakes, lanterns, and gatherings under the full moon. It symbolizes unity, gratitude for the harvest, and wishes for family togetherness. The bright moon reminds us of loved ones near and far.





*“Filipino history is
American history.”*

– Dr. Dawn Bohulano Mabalon



Filipino American History

Leadership, Resilience, and Renewal



October is Filipino American History Month, honoring the vital role of Filipino Americans in U.S. history. From early immigrants to labor leaders like Larry Itliong, their stories show courage and community strength. Learning this history helps us celebrate Filipino contributions to justice and society.





*"Be a light in the
world."*

– Deepak Chopra



Diwali

Celebration of Light, Learning and
Renewal



Diwali is a festival celebrated by millions of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists around the world. Families light diyas (lamps) to symbolize the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. It's a time of learning, giving, and starting anew with hope.





*"Peace begins with
understanding."*

– Buddhist Teaching



Bodhi Day

The Power of Wisdom and Compassion



Bodhi Day marks the
Buddha's enlightenment
under the Bodhi tree. It's a
time to reflect on
mindfulness, wisdom, and
compassion toward all living
beings. Celebrating Bodhi
Day reminds us of the
importance of kindness and
understanding in our daily
lives.

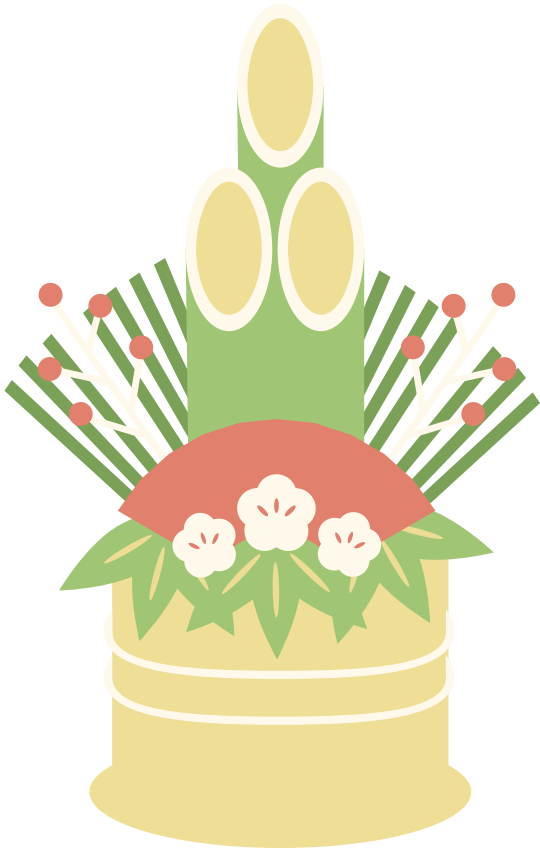


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*“Start the year with
intention and honor
your journey.”*

– Japanese Proverb



Japanese Oshogatsu

Reflection and Renewal



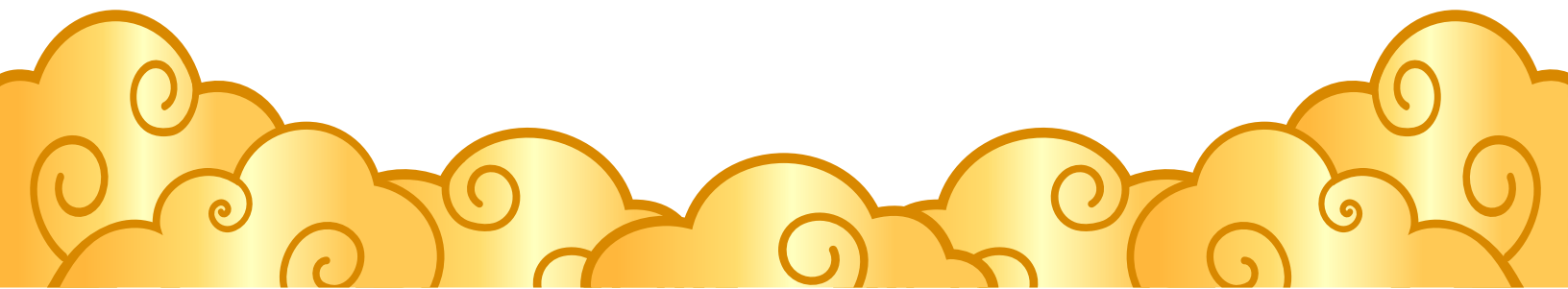
Oshogatsu is the Japanese New Year, filled with traditions like eating special foods, visiting shrines, and writing New Year wishes. It's a time to reflect on the past year and set positive intentions for the year ahead. Oshogatsu celebrates hope, renewal, and family bonds.





“Culture is not a costume, it’s a legacy.”

– Unknown AAPI Student Activist



Lunar New Year

Traditions of Joy and Renewal



Lunar New Year is celebrated in many Asian cultures with dragon dances, red envelopes, and family reunions. Each year is represented by a zodiac animal bringing unique strengths and stories. The holiday is a time for joy, honoring ancestors, and wishing prosperity.





“Color your world with
compassion.”

– AAPI Artist Collective



Holi

A Celebration of Renewal and
Community Joy



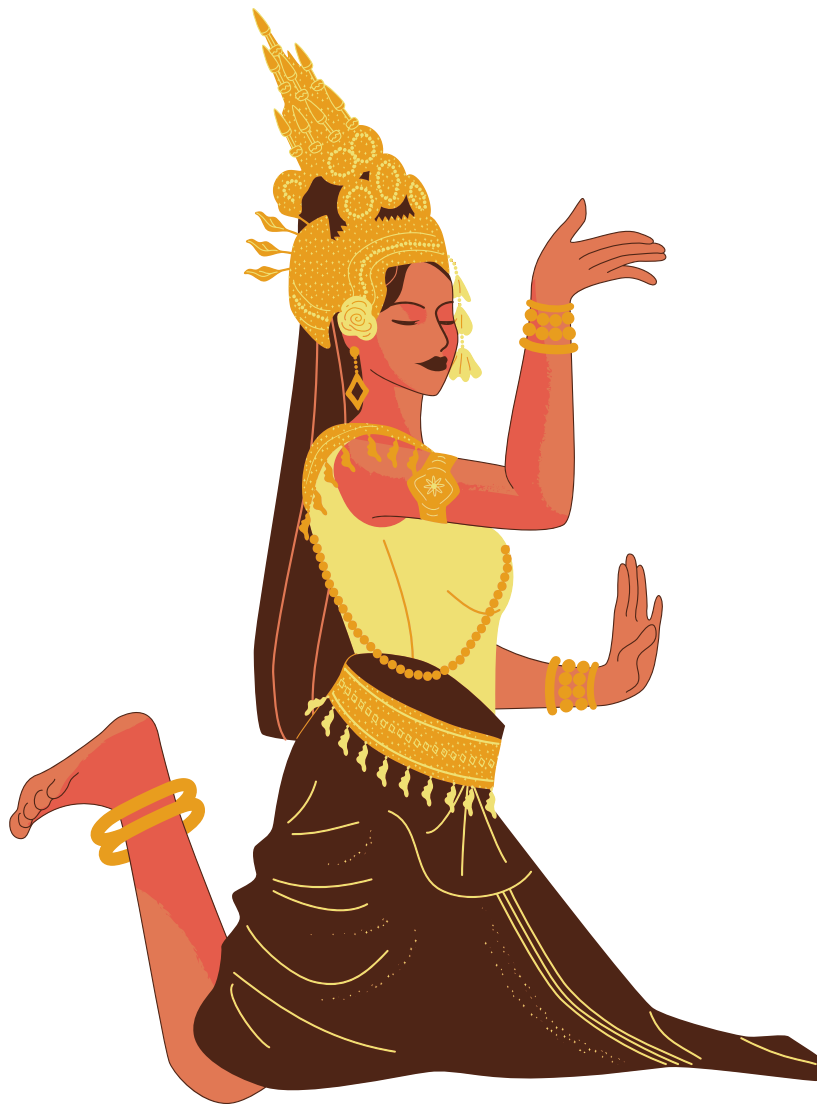
Holi is an Indian festival known for throwing bright colors, music, and laughter. It celebrates the arrival of spring, love, and new beginnings. Holi teaches us about forgiveness, joy, and the beauty of community.





*“Spring into new growth
with purpose.”*

– Cambodian American Cultural Center



Khmer New Year

Water Blessings and Gratitude



Khmer New Year, or Chol Chnam Thmey, marks the traditional new year in Cambodia with three days of celebration. People play water games, visit temples, and show gratitude through blessings and dances. The festival is a joyful time of renewal, family, and hope.





*"We are not a
monolith. We are a
mosaic."*

– AAPI Civic Engagement Network



Celebrate AAP Heritage

From the Classroom to the Community



Asian Pacific American
Heritage Month

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, celebrating the rich cultures, histories, and contributions of AAPI communities. It's a time to honor leaders, artists, scientists, and everyday heroes who have shaped our country. Learning these stories inspires respect, pride, and understanding.





“Celebrate every part
of who you are.”

– Niko Lim, Queer Filipino Educator



Intersectional Voices

Uplifting AAPI LGBTQ+ Narratives



June recognizes Pride Month
and the diverse voices within
AAPI LGBTQ+ communities.

By learning their stories, we
honor those who have fought
for equality and continue to
inspire acceptance.

Celebrating intersectionality
helps us build a more
inclusive and loving
community.



THE BRAVE & THE FIRST

AAPI LGBTQ TRAILBLAZERS

