

Youth News

April is National
Child Abuse
Prevention Month



CHILD ABUSE

April 2021

National Child Abuse Prevention Month



Parental stress

Risk Factors

Substance use

Poverty

Protective Factors

Parental resilience Nurturing and attachment
Knowledge of parenting and child development
Concrete support in times of need Social connections
Social-emotional competence of children



Foster! Adopt! Mentor!

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Written By: Sarah Holcomb

A growing concern since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the rising cases of child abuse. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), public health emergencies typically increase the risk of child neglect and abuse due to increased family stressors such as loss of social and financial support and resources. Although the percentage of emergency room visits related to child neglect and abuse has decreased since March 2020, the percentage of these visits that result in hospitalization has increased drastically when compared to 2019 data. This suggests that many cases of child neglect and abuse are not being reported due to safety concerns surrounding seeking healthcare during a pandemic. It also suggests that the severity of child abuse is growing more serious, particularly in homes with



working parents who are juggling working from home while providing childcare and online learning assistance. These types of situations can increase family stressors which can result in child emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

So what can be done? According to the Alliance for Children in Butler County, Pennsylvania, community engagement is key. This organization has provided board games to local families in order to encourage bonding and relieve stress. They also encourage everyone to check in on the families within their communities and offer support where it's needed. Running errands or dropping off dinner to busy parents can help to ease stressors within the home and prevent child neglect and abuse.

Youth News



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I am deeply honored to work with these amazing young people and interns. The focus this month is National Child Abuse Prevention. I am asking you to please consider opening your heart and home to become a foster, adoptive parent or mentor. So many children, youth and teens need you.

One of our team professionals may call you for support. Please **"Answer the Call"**.

From city-to-city, coast-to-coast, and nation-to-nation, our focus is **Foster Adopt Mentor Investing in of Lives of Youth**. I hope our stories encourages you to consider becoming a foster/adoptive parent or mentor.

Thank you,

La'Toria

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Nutritional Strategies to Help Improve Health in Children with Autism



Written By: Keisha Mitchell

Caring for a child in foster care can be difficult. Caring for a child with autism, while in foster care can be even more challenging. In the spirit of National Autism Awareness Month, in this article, we will focus on strategies to help improve the health of a child with Autism.

Autism can be defined as a developmental disorder that impairs three things. Impaired development, impaired ability to communicate proficiently, and impaired ability to interact socially competently. Research shows that nutrition is a problem in children with Autism.

When you dissect that definition you begin to understand that most children battling Autism can't openly communicate to you when they are hungry, when they are full, when they are constipated, or when they need to empty their bowels.

Remember, the brain and gut are directly and impact one another. It is important to implement whole foods when feeding a child with autism. Listed below are foods, and supplements that can help.

1. **Fruit:** Exchange sugary drinks and candy for fresh fruit
2. **Oats:** You can do so many things with oats. Oatmeal, shakes, smoothies, the list goes on. Oats are a great source of fiber to keep the bowels moving.
3. **Beans:** They are an amazing source of protein, and they are easy to eat. You can make soups, dips, and even patties with these.
4. **Vegetables:** Veggies are amazing for the brain, the skin, and feeds the body with nutrients. To retain their nutritional value,

you can steam them and add them as a side dish

- 5 Probiotics:** Probiotics are living microorganisms that are great for gut health. Probiotics such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei*, and *Bifidus* can be taken in supplemental form or digested daily in yogurts, kefir, or kombucha. When looking for yogurt check the label to ensure that contains live and active cultures and beware of processed sugars.



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**Preparing
healthy
meals can
help youth
feel better**

Youth Spotlight



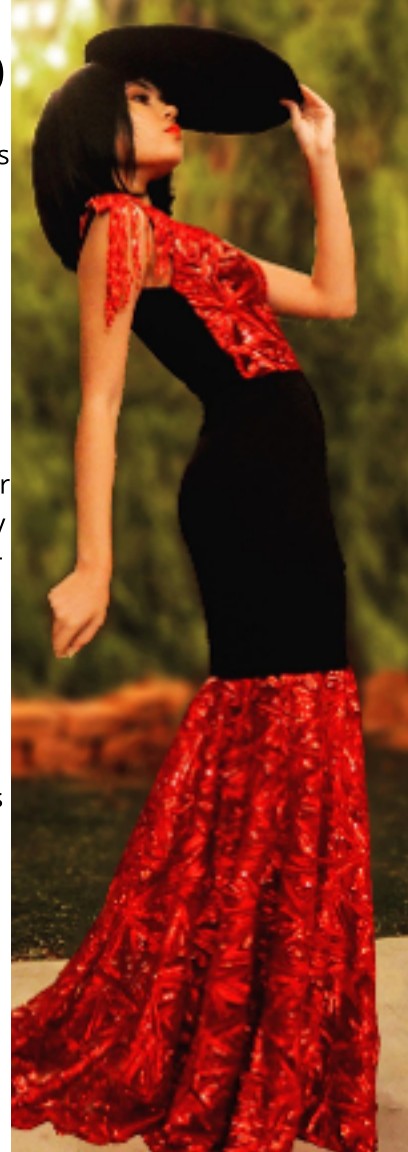
Sydney Webb is a 16-year-old high school senior. She was born and raised in Las Vegas, NV. Sydney lives with her mom ,dad and her dog Sierra. She has an older brother who lives in another state.

Sydney Webb

Sydney is part of the National Honors Society. She has applied and been accepted into College of Southern Nevada, which she will be starting in the fall. She plans on studying cyber security and fashion.

When Sydney is not focused on her schooling. She is modeling and acting. Sydney has been modeling for 3 years now. She is an Internationally published model. She has walked for several designers in runway shows. She has also been featured on clothing websites. Sydney will be teaching modeling classes to up and coming models. Sydney has been in two short films and two commercials in the year she has been acting.

If you are interested in booking Sydney for a modeling or acting job. Please send her an email at **sydneywebblv@gmail.com**



Rise Up Against Anti-Asian Violence

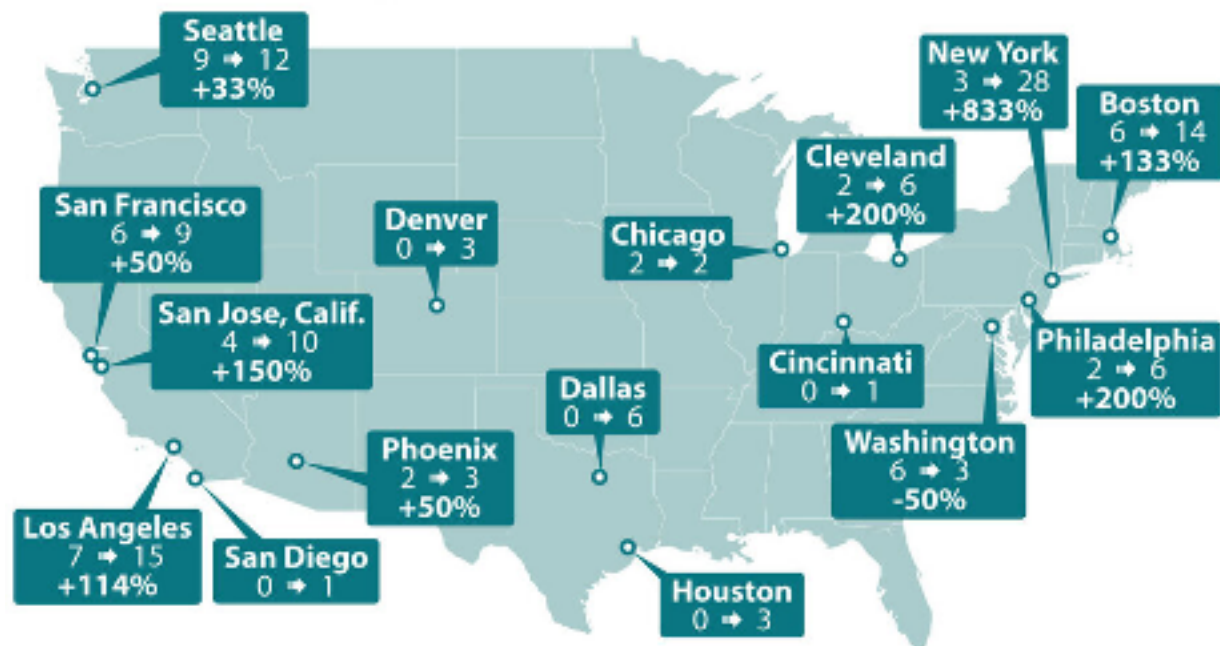
Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

I was born and raised in this country. Yet as an Asian-American, I have faced many microaggressions from childhood to adulthood. From the innocent, questions like: “Where are you from?” or comments like “Wow your English is really great!”, to the more offensive insults regarding the shape of my eyes or how flat my face is. The insinuation of the food I eat, certain cultural customs my family practices, egregious bullying, threats of violence and recent rise of xenophobia, I’ve heard and experienced it all. I was raised most of my life fully integrated in the African-American community. My family was the only Asian family living in our public housing projects, I am a proud graduate from an HBCU, a member of the National Black Association for Social Workers as recommended by my professors. As a social activist raising awareness for foster youth rights, LGBTQ+ rights and my allyship in the African-American community, I never thought there would be a movement for my Asian community. I’m proud that a once silenced, secretive community, is now taking a stand against racist, xenophobic behaviors. Just like an social movement, we need allyship of communities taking a stand. Be an ally by standing up when you see violence against Asians, speak up when stereotypes or microaggressions are displayed, and take the time to educate yourself on other’s cultures.



Big rise in anti-Asian hate crimes last year

Anti-Asian hate crime reports and change from 2019 to 2020



14% of anti-Asian hate incidents are **violent**

Prejudice incidents targeting Asian American and Pacific Islander populations



Preventing Child Abuse and ACES

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

In the United States, at least 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the past year, and this is likely an underestimate.¹ This is not only a public health issue but our economy is negatively impacted as well. In the United States, the total lifetime economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect was approximately \$124 billion in 2008.¹ This economic burden rivals the cost of other high-profile public health problems, such as stroke and type 2 diabetes. With the rising research on [adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\)](#), we now understand that the effects of child abuse and neglect can have a long-term impact on health, well-being, and future success. Prevention is key to ending the harmful effects of child abuse/neglect.

As a community, we can identify and address the risk factors for violence in order to build protective factors to prevent child abuse/neglect.



Review the resources below to learn how you can reduce risks and build protective factors to prevent child abuse/neglect. It takes a village!

References:

1. Fortson B, Klevens J, Merrick M, Gilbert L, Alexander S. (2016). Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Reducing Risks – Building Protective Factors



Risk Factors	Activities	Protective Factors
Parent's lack of understanding child's needs and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Parenting and child development information◆ Assessments & screening◆ Promote PCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Knowledge of parenting and child development◆ SE competence of child
Substance abuse/mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Assessments & screening◆ Information on health and safety◆ Referrals/linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Parental resilience◆ Concrete support
Low education/low income	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Goal setting◆ Referrals/linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Parental resilience◆ Concrete support
Social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Home visits◆ Parent group activities◆ Referrals/linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Social Connections



**1. PARENTAL
RESILIENCE**



**2. SOCIAL
CONNECTIONS**



**3. CONCRETE
SUPPORT IN
TIMES OF NEED.**

5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS

FOR PREVENTING RISK OF CHILD ABUSE.

SOURCE: Prevent Child Abuse America

**4. KNOWLEDGE
OF PARENTING
& CHILD
DEVELOPMENT.**



**5. SOCIAL &
EMOTIONAL
COMPETENCE
OF CHILDREN.**



**LEARN
MORE ABOUT
THESE 5 FACTORS:**

[preventchildabuse.org/
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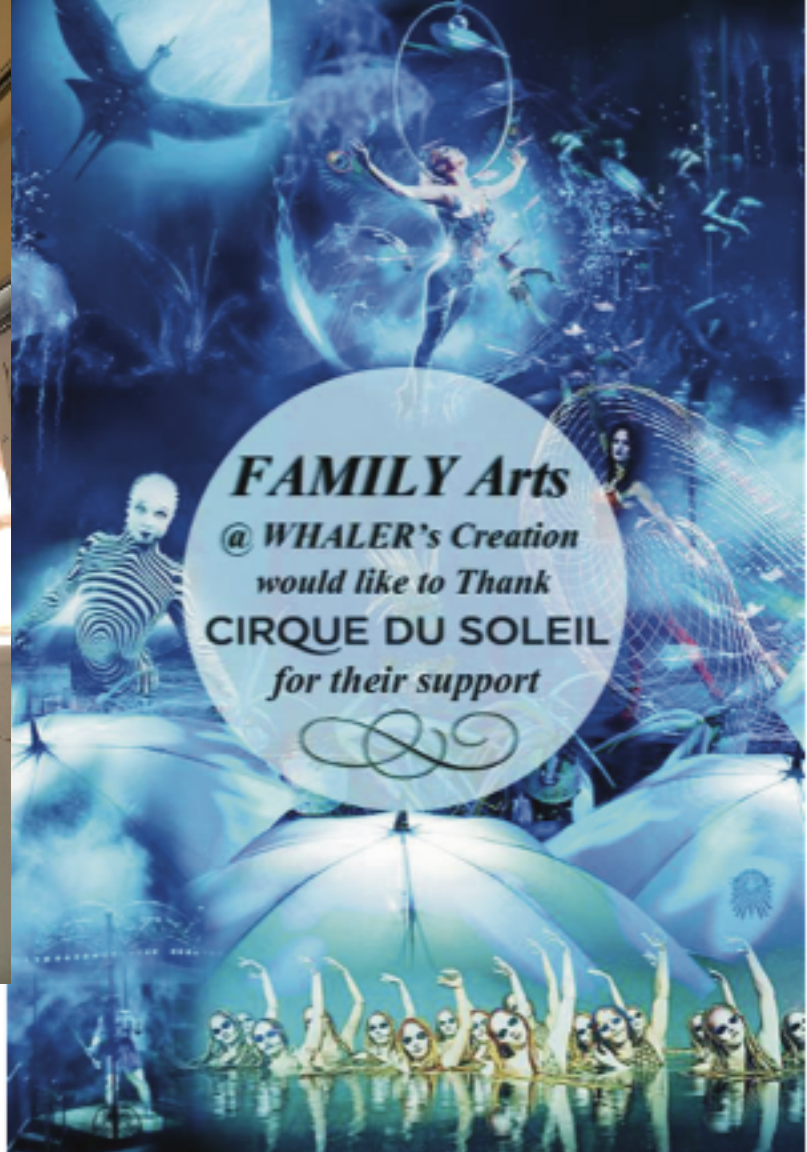
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From city to city and coast to coast, our focus is:
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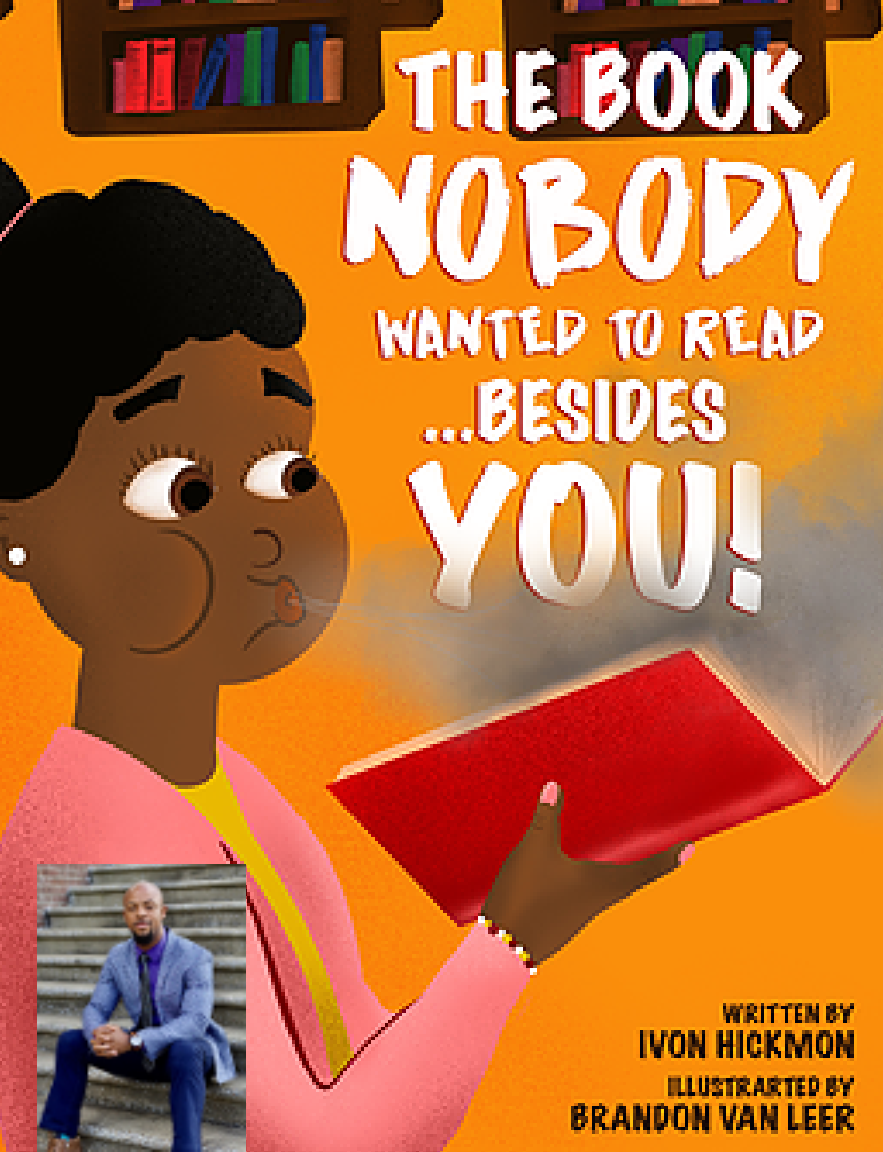
Youth News magazine is a way to celebrate the good news of youth. *Youth News* provides fostered, adopted, kinship cared and mentored youth with real on-the-job training skills. Youth are paid as they learn how to produce this publication for the general community. Donations for ad space is how we pay youth in training. The "Dove" logo is a symbol we use as a message of good news. Our goal is to bring Outstanding, Inspirational and Motivational stories to encourage people to open their hearts and support youth.

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THE BOOK NOBODY WANTED TO READ ...BESIDES YOU!

WRITTEN BY
IVON HICKMON
ILLUSTRATED BY
BRANDON VAN LEER

The Book Nobody wanted to Read Besides You!

This beautiful story captures the need for inclusivity and emotional intelligence. Readers are introduced to the Protagonist, as she shows empathy and compassion towards our book character. By definition, inclusion is the action or state of including or being included within a group. Inclusion must be taught and fought for. Equipping our scholars is essential for this life's journey. Emotional Intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way. This dynamic story teaches your scholars a proven, practical tactic to develop emotional intelligence skills. After reading this story, your scholars will be empowered to love and embrace themselves fully and gain awareness of their emotional state. This read enforces our mission, which is to connect, serve, and empower young scholars.

About the Author: The youngest of three boys, son of Military Parents, Ivon found his dreams of playing among the NFL greats were closer than he'd ever imagine. Ivon's football career journeyed from "last man" on the roster to earning his football scholarship with honors of being selected as Team Captain and MVP. Life threw test and trials at Ivon but somehow, he made it out. Ivon passionately serves Sport teams through his incredibly, inspiring, life-changing experiences he conquered through many trial and errors.

A true "Girl Dad," Ivon spends hours a month visiting both his daughter's school, cultivating young scholars through the power of reading. These visits propelled Ivon to release his debut children's book, "The Book Nobody Wanted to Read...Besides You," a fun and silly book that introduces kids to Emotional Intelligence and Inclusion. Ivon believes that the earlier kids can understand Emotional Intelligence, the more empowered they will become and the more kids will want to learn about inclusion, we will see unity.

Teens

Review: *Autism in Love*

Written By: Sarah Holcomb

Autism in Love is an award-winning documentary that captures a glimpse into the lives of 4 adults living with autism and learning how to navigate their romantic relationships. The film follows a young single man and his dating journey, a young married couple navigating communication challenges within their marriage, and a long-married couple coping with cancer and caregiving. Each of the 4 individuals is on varying levels of the autism spectrum and provides a vulnerable view into the unique challenges that they face when seeking out and maintaining loving relationships. The film is emotional and inspiring and challenges the way that our society views love and relationships. It will make you laugh, cry, and reflect on the meaning of true love. Rent *Autism in Love* on iTunes, and read about the film at <https://www.autisminlove.com/>.



Talk

Food & Body Positivity in Social Media

Written By: Lenna

I recently started eating healthier due to social media influencers on different platforms. These influencers have helped me discover creativity in cooking and making delicious food with many health benefits. One of my greatest motivations is people that have confidence in what they eat and show true signs of happiness, like the female singer Lizzo. She expresses a lot of her favorite foods on different platforms, and does not feel guilty about what she eats, because she makes sure she eats what feels right. I feel that restricting your body is wrong, and over the pandemic so many kids and adults have done so. We need to fuel our bodies and every day it is influencers and strong women like Michell Obama that help us do so.



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The Mindful Corner

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

Mindfulness is a technique that can help us stop and be in the present moment rather than the past or the future. By practicing mindfulness, we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and the environment around us. It helps us to refocus and recenter our mind, body, and spirit. Throughout this issue, you have read several articles that may have been thought-provoking or tapped into your emotions. Whether you were inspired by a story or an article that triggered a traumatic memory for you, take this moment to reflect on how you are feeling and switch gears to some fun activities.



Practice S.T.O.P., an informal mindfulness technique that allows us to take a breath and check-in to see how we're doing. It can assist us in being present and intentional at the moment. S.T.O.P. is an acronym that stands for:

S — Stop: Press pause on your thoughts and actions.

T — Take a breath Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths to center yourself, and bring yourself fully into the present moment.

O — Observe Observe what's going on with your:

- **Body:** What physical sensations are you aware of (touch, sight, hearing, taste, smell)? Do you feel tired, hungry or thirsty?
- **Emotions:** What are you feeling right now?
- **Mind:** What assumptions are you making about your feelings? What is the story you're telling yourself about why you are having them?

P — Proceed with more awareness

Proceed with whatever you were doing, making a conscious, intentional choice to incorporate what you just learned. With greater awareness and intention, perhaps asking yourself, "What is most important right now? What deserves my attention right now?" Notice what is bubbling to the surface for you and then use that as a guide to proceed with awareness and intention into the next moment.

***Cite this content:** Trinh Mai and Rob Davies, "Practice: S.T.O.P.," Accelerate University of Utah Health curriculum, Sep. 20, 2018. Available at: <http://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/explore/practice-s-t-o-p>*

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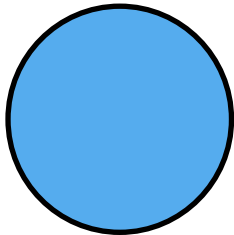
Meet our
TEAM

GET TO K NOW OUR TEAM



Editor-In-Chief

Ms. Loney Nguyen pronounced (Lonnie) is a licensed clinical social worker, professional model, and servant leader. Loney is the Director of Programs for WHALER's Creation and serves as Editor in Chief of Youth News magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation and Maryland's appointed Foster Youth Ombuds. An expert in youth engagement, she has over 13 years of lived and professional child welfare experience in Maryland, and 7 years supervisory experience in the District of Columbia. An international pageant Queen, she was crowned Miss Baltimore United States, 2019 and Miss Vietnam DC, 2014 respectively. When she is not competing in pageants, she volunteers her time as a local/national pageant judge, coach, and teaches life skills & etiquette classes to encourage a positive self image that ignites the Royal Queen/King in youth and adults.



Contributing Writers

Amulya is a Contributing Writer for Youth News Magazine published by FAMILY Arts @ WHALER's Creation. Amulya enjoys helping people of all ages from teaching seniors technology to teaching elementary kids on concepts that they don't understand and teaching other students to code. In her free time, she likes to play sports, code, graphic design, read, and write novels. Her ambition is to be a scientist with a focus on neuroscience, and genetics. She is passionate about standing up for what she believes in and volunteering where it is needed!

Meet our TEAM

GET TO K NOW OUR TEAM



Keisha Mitchell is an inspirational author, writer, poet, and creator. She self-published her first book titled, DO BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER? at the age of 20. Keisha chooses her words wisely as she believes that her greatest power comes out through the use of words. Her favorite line to use, "What you speak is what you seek." As a registered nursing student, Keisha is dedicated to using her voice to advocate for improving health and wellness within the minority community.



Lenna is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience. She does not shy from argumentative pieces and hopes audiences open their minds to different viewpoints from her writing.



Sarah Holcomb is a Human Resources professional, a graduate student studying organizational psychology, and a site ambassador for her organization's LGBTQ+ employee organization. With a passion for personal development, she lives by the mantra "I never dreamed of success, I worked for it" (Estee Lauder). Sarah enjoys writing about psychology and is a big believer in the power of positive thinking and of owning one's destiny. In her spare time, she enjoys reading non-fiction, practicing piano, learning Spanish, and riding her electric scooter around Washington, D.C., which she calls home.

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