



# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

Whatcom Family YMCA

May, 2021

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month is a month to celebrate and pay tribute to the contributions generations of Asian/Pacific Americans have made to American history, society and culture. A rather broad term, Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).



The month of May was chosen to commemorate May 7, 1843 the date on which the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United State and to mark May 10, 1869, the date the first transcontinental railroad in the United States was completed with significant contributions from Chinese pioneers.

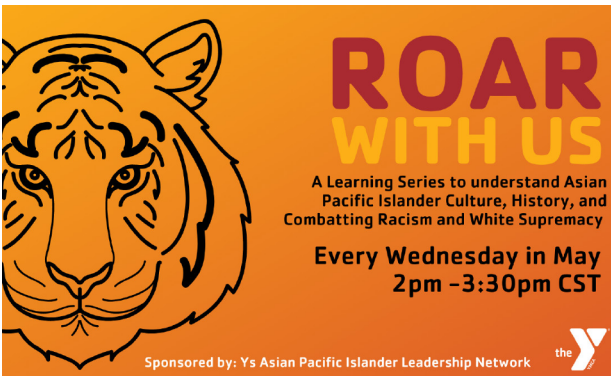
## THE “MODEL MINORITY” MYTH

Data measuring income level, educational attainment, and other markers of success indicate that Asian Americans as a group—a categorization that, itself, fails to reflect the diversity within these communities—are highly successful. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources, Asian Americans as a group have the highest rates of college and advanced degrees, the highest median family income, low poverty rates, and so on. The assumption that these broad and general statistics apply universally to all Asian and Pacific Islander communities perpetuates the “model minority” myth.

According to the model-minority myth, Asian Americans are universally successful because of factors such as intelligence, hard work, and patience—characteristics that, in addition to enabling some Asian Americans to attain financial and career success, have also enabled them to “overcome” prejudice and discrimination. Furthermore, this myth suggests that other racial or ethnic minorities in the United States should model their own efforts on the “example” set by Asian Americans (Chow, 2011; Le, 2015).

The label “model minority” has created inaccurate stereotypes that negate the unique, nuanced, and varied experiences of Asian and Pacific Islander communities, essentially rendering them invisible. Additionally, the myth’s effects have:

- led to the belief that many of the challenges around education, health care, and other public institutions faced by other minority groups are not as pronounced for Asian and Pacific Islander communities;
- led educators, policy- and decision-makers, service providers, and others to make general assumptions about the group as a whole and to overlook the unique needs of individuals and communities they serve;
- isolated Asians and Pacific Islanders from other communities of color by implying that minority groups who have not experienced the same perceived success as Asians are “somehow at fault for their [positions] in society” (Chow, 2011, “The Model Minority,” para. 2); and denied experiences of discrimination that Asians and Pacific Islanders continue to face today.



## ROAR WITH US: ADVOCACY, ALLYSHIP AND ACTION TO COMBAT ANTI-ASIAN HATE

If you were not able to join the discussion live, here is the link to the recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zclKEPUCYuA&t=78s>

## WELCOME NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Thank you to the following staff and volunteers who have agreed to join our DEI Committee: Payton Chick (Membership), Dante Check (Youth Sports), Libby Teerink (Teens) and Giang Ha (Board Member).

If you are interested in lending your voice to the committee, please contact Lynda Purdie.