

# Midwest Longitudinal Study of Asian American Families

## MLSAAF Newsletter



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CROWN FAMILY SCHOOL OF SCOAIL WORK, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

### Greetings from Professor Choi, the PI of MLSAAF

Dear MLSAAF Participants,

First of all, I would like to express my deepest appreciation of those who participated in the 4th survey of this longitudinal study. Our team has been working hard to collect responses for the Wave 4 survey, and you might have received multiple messages from us, over the last few months and especially during late June. I would greatly appreciate your patience and understanding, as we believe that the goal of our study—to better understand the experiences and improve the well-being of young Asian Americans—is more timely than ever considering our sociopolitical climate.

With your continued support, we have indeed discovered several important findings about Asian American families and made important strides in better understanding the lived experiences of Asian Americans. (Some of them are summarized in this newsletter.)

I sincerely hope that those of you who have not completed the survey choose to do so as soon as possible! We want to bring more responsive services and resources to Asian American communities by amplifying **YOUR VOICES** at the national level. Your participation in this survey will certainly help this critical endeavor!

Asian Americans are significantly understudied. We are often lumped together and thought to be problem free, according to the myth of the “model minority.” Although many Asian Americans do manage well in certain aspects, our experiences are diverse, and our struggles are too often not seen. We are asking for your help in continuing to do this work towards better care and visibility for our communities.

I hope you are managing during this unprecedented time and wish you a healthy and safe summer!

Sincerely,  
Yoonsun Choi, Ph.D., MSSW

### MLSAAF Wave 4 focuses on the Impact of COVID-19!

The current data collection is funded by the Russell Sage Foundation to assess the racial experiences of young Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on civic behaviors (e.g., voting, political participation) and mental health. During the pandemic, Asian Americans have been subjected to racial hostility. Our research team aims to document the harmful impact of racial discrimination, and we are particularly interested in how young Asian Americans respond to this experience.



# Introducing MLSAAF Staff!

## Meet Ahyeon Cho



Ahyeon Cho is the Project Manager of the 2021 MLSAAF project. After Covid-19, the rise of Asian American hate crimes has made her more committed to research how such changes impacted Asian Americans regarding their racial experiences and their mental health. She believes that it is important to make Asian Americans voices heard by creating representations of Asian American experiences accessible, which is what the MLSAAF survey aims to do. When she is not contacting participants, she spends most of her pastime in the world of Animal Crossing.

## Meet Bryan Gu



Bryan is an undergraduate research assistant with the 2021 MLSAAF project. Through his work with MLSAAF, he hopes to better understand the various environmental and cultural factors which underlie mental health outcomes in Asian American young adults. Ultimately he seeks to work towards new interventions that can help to address issues of stigma and internalized trauma within the larger Asian American community.

## Meet Eunkyung Choo



Eunkyung Choo has been with the MLSAAF team since 2014. She was an interviewer in Waves 1 & 2 and maintains good relationships with many parents who participated in our past survey. She is truly one of our most valuable team members since she knows the history of MLSAAF and plays a central role in bridging gaps between newly joining staff with the participants.

## Meet Michelle Gan



Michelle Gan joined MLSAAF in 2016, when she was a student at the University of Chicago. She studied Public Policy with a concentration in International Development. Since graduating, she has worked as a public sector consultant for state and local government agencies. Michelle also organizes and volunteers with various grassroots campaigns centered on economic and racial justice. She will follow up with many of the participants who have not completed the survey and encourage them to participate.

## Meet Hye-Min Jung



Hye-Min Jung has been a Research Assistant with MLSAAF since 2021. She graduated from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy in 2020. As a recent immigrant, she wants to find better ways to support the well-being of Asian American young adults.

## Meet Soo Young Lee



Soo Young has been a Research Assistant with MLSAAF since 2018. She is a social work doctoral student at the University of Chicago, and is interested in exploring the intersections of storytelling, identity, critical consciousness, and wellbeing among young Asian Americans.

## Wave 4 updates

Here are our most recent study results! When we first started our study in 2014 (Wave 1), the MLSAAF youth participants were 15 years old on average. Now in 2021 (Wave 4), our participants are 21 years old on average, finishing up high school, continuing onto higher education, and a good proportion of them are working.



Study participants are 21 years old on average,



Nearly 95% have graduated high school,



82% are in higher education,



44% in a romantic relationship,



62% employed,



70% currently lives with parents.

Unfortunately, we have found, among the MLSAAF participants, an upward trend in mental health struggles during the transition from adolescence to adulthood among Asian Americans, and this upward trend has continued. For example, suicidal ideation substantially increased from 9.67% in 2014 (Wave 1) to 16% in 2018 (Wave 3). In the 2021 (Wave 4) data that we have collected so far, over 17% of the participants have reported suicidal thoughts.

## Important Study Findings about Asian American Families

### A unique blend of cultures:

The MLSAAF has discovered that Filipino and Korean American family processes each acculturate to the mainstream culture while modifying traditional elements in a unique process that is neither stereotypically Western nor Asian.

**For both groups**, core traditional cultural values such as familism (i.e., respect for adults, family obligation, and sacrifice for the family) endure despite significant signs of acculturation.

**Filipino American families** seem to demonstrate greater acculturation than Korean American families (e.g., more English speaking), yet express more traditional aspects of familism and go to greater lengths to reinforce them in their children.

**Within Korean American families**, core values of familism are palpable among first-generation immigrant parents but also persevere among second-generation youth, even when parents do not explicitly instill such values.

The results highlight that the characteristics of presumed collectivist cultures in America are highly variable and that Western parenting theories do not necessarily align with Asian American parenting practices. We also found that some traditional parenting practices (e.g., psychological control, parental self-worth based on child's performance, and gendered norms) predict more parent-child conflict and mental distress. Parents should be guided to modify these practices.

# Hurry and Participate in the 2021 Wave 4 survey!

The Wave 4 data collection is in its final stage!

If you haven't, please complete the survey and receive a \$50 gift card. **To participate, you can scan the provided QR code, or simply you email us at [mlsaaf@crownschool.uchicago.edu](mailto:mlsaaf@crownschool.uchicago.edu). If you already have the survey link, you can simply re-open it and proceed until you finish the survey.**



As previously done, when you complete 95% or more of the survey, you will be automatically entered into a raffle for a chance to win an additional \$100 gift card. So far, we have given away 23 \$100 gift cards. Our final raffle will select another **9 winners**.

**The final drawing will occur only when we reach a 74% participation rate (That is, 583 participants). We are already at 62% participation rate. We need at least 89 or more participants to reach our goal of a 74% participation rate! Please help us reach this goal and participate in Wave 4!**

Visit [www.mlsaaf.org](http://www.mlsaaf.org) for blog posts on current events and more info!

Warm regards,  
The MLSAAF Team

|  | Surveys Collected |
|--|-------------------|
| Korean participants  | 289               |
| Filipino participants  | 205               |
| Total Surveys collected as of 7/31   | 494               |
| <b><i>We need 89 or more participants, to reach our final goal of 74% participation rate by 8/31</i></b> |                   |