

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Wellness. Advocacy. Voices.
Education. Support.



ABOUT US



Founded in 2016 as an initiative of United Chinese Americans (UCA), WAVES was created to address the significant and often unmet mental health needs within Chinese and Asian American communities by a group of concerned parents in Chicago. As the organization expanded its reach and impact, WAVES became an independent nonprofit organization in 2023, enabling it to further strengthen its mission and serve communities nationwide.

Today, WAVES brings together dedicated and compassionate volunteers, mental health professionals, and advocates across generations and from coast to coast. These individuals work alongside our valued supporters and partners to promote mental wellness and strengthen support systems for individuals and families.

Many youth and families in our communities face challenges such as depression, anxiety, suicidality, social isolation, identity struggles, and the pressures and conflicts of navigating different cultures. These challenges are often compounded by stigma surrounding mental health, language barriers, limited mental health literacy, and a shortage of culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate services.





Through our pillars of Wellness, Advocacy, Voices, Education, and Support, WAVES works to reduce stigma, increase mental health literacy, elevate community voices, and expand access to support. We accomplish this through culturally informed education, community-engaged research, authentic and longitudinal community engagement, and advocacy efforts that empower individuals and strengthen families.

While important progress has been made, significant gaps in access and support remain. WAVES remains committed to building a future where every individual and family can access the resources, understanding, and care needed to thrive.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This year reaffirmed that meaningful change begins with authentic relationships. Through intergenerational connections, community partnerships, and culturally responsive engagement, we strengthened resilience and promoted mental well-being among immigrant, refugee, and underserved communities. Our community-engaged research and innovative digital storytelling initiatives amplified lived experiences, reduced stigma, and generated evidence to inform action.

Together with community members, researchers, educators, and service providers, we advanced suicide prevention efforts by increasing social connectedness, expanding access to support, and building community capacity. We remain committed to fostering hope, belonging, and measurable impact for future generations. Heartfelt thank you to all for riding WAVES with us.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lily Chen'.

Lily Chen

Executive Director & Founder,
UCA WAVES





OUR VALUES

Vision. Integrity. Compassion. Connection.

OUR VISION

A supportive and engaging community that fosters the healthy and holistic development of our AAPI youth.



OUR MISSION

- Raise awareness of the mental health challenges that young Asian Americans face due to familial, cultural, and societal factors
- Develop community support and resources to improve youth mental health
- Promote cultural sensitivity in psychological well-being and interventions
- Encourage civic engagement in public policies to address mental health issues



FINANCIAL REVIEW



REVENUE

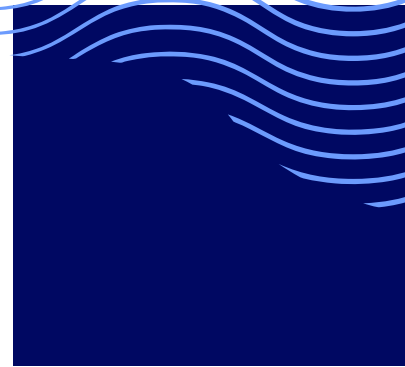
UCA WAVES generated **\$1,031,053** in total revenue and other support during fiscal year 2025. Foundation grants remained the primary source of support, contributing **\$786,920, or 76.3%** of the total, followed by government grants of **\$219,629, or 21.3%**. The remaining **\$24,504, or 2.4%**, came from in-kind contributions, other contributions, fundraising income, and other income.

This diversified funding base reflects strong support from both public and private partners and helps sustain UCA WAVES' mission-driven programs and initiatives.

EXPENSES

UCA WAVES incurred \$618,092 in total expenses in 2025. Program services represented \$535,606, or 86.7% of total expenses, while management and general expenses accounted for 7.8% and fundraising expenses for 5.5%. This reflects WAVES' strong commitment to directing resources toward mission-driven programs.





MAIN GRANTS

In 2025, we secured several grants that expanded our ability to serve North Carolina's AAPI population. Funding from NC DHHS allowed us to increase education, outreach, and peer support opportunities for youth and families. A separate grant through UNC Greensboro's "Strong Minds, Strong Communities" program (also funded by NC DHHS) enabled us to launch our own Strong Minds program, providing free one-on-one guidance through trained Community Health Workers.

Support from the Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina Foundation advanced youth mental health programming and strengthened efforts to increase access to language-accessible, community-centered mental health resources. The Triangle Community Foundation provided funding for strategic planning, strengthening organizational capacity and preparing for future growth. Meanwhile, a Wake County mini-grant supported local education and outreach efforts, allowing us to bring resources directly to community members through workshops and programs. We also received funding from the Julian Grace Foundation, whose support allowed us to increase our capacity and strengthen existing youth programs.

To all of our supporters: we will never be able to truly express the depth of our gratitude. Your generosity makes what we do possible.

OUR History

2016 | WAVES was founded as an initiative of UCA to address the unmet mental health needs of Chinese and Asian American communities by a group of concerned parents in Chicago. The organization launched with its first mental health education sessions at the inaugural Chinese American Convention in Washington, D.C.

2017-2019 | We expanded nationally through conferences and workshops including the *Asian Parents, American Children* Conference and a major Anti-Bullying Conference in Chicago, IL. WAVES attended the 2nd Chinese American conventions in DC and held multiple education workshops in the Midwest region.

2020-2021 | During the COVID-19 pandemic, WAVES launched the *Breaking Silences* project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. With the help of four licensed clinicians and advocates, WAVES provided multiple virtual mental health education and published op-eds addressing anti-Asian hate. Additionally, WAVES helped launch the production of the documentary *Silent War*, directed by the award-winning filmmaker Changfu Chang.

2022-2023 | WAVES started Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings, funded by SAMHSA. We partnered with organizations including NAMI Chinese and launched our online peer support network, WAVES Village. WAVES' Executive Director was invited to advocate for AAPI Mental Health at the White House and served on SAMHSA AANHPI workgroups. To round out 2023, WAVES incorporated as a North Carolina 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

2024 | We started the first-ever research study in the state focusing on AAPI health care experiences, the *Identifying NC AAPI Health Priorities* project (funded by the Blue Cross NC Foundation). Additionally, WAVES organized 7 sessions at the 2024 Chinese American Mental Health Summit in DC and continued grassroots suicide prevention efforts in through conferences, presentations, and youth and community engagement.

2025 | WAVES expanded its in-person programming in North Carolina, including peer support, education, and outreach events for youth and families. We also hosted our first North Carolina conference, *Roots & Resilience*, which featured the premiere of the *Silent War* documentary and kicked off a nationwide screening series.

2026 | We moved into our first office, reached thousands through Lunar New Year events, and held the mental health summit *Community In Action* at UCA's 5th National Convention in Las Vegas.



AAPI YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

A Quiet Crisis in Focus



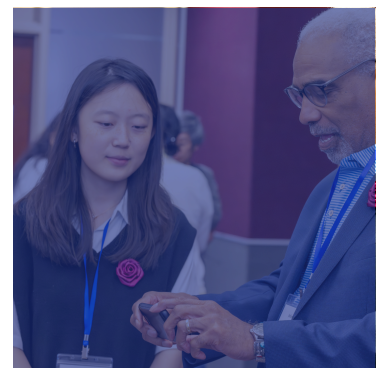
Despite being one of the populations with the highest rates of mental illness and suicide, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are also among the least likely to seek professional help.

No matter their spoken language or country of origin, AAPI individuals face a unique set of challenges that impact their well-being. For example, while first-generation immigrants and refugees carry the weight of leaving their home countries and acclimating to a new, unfamiliar society, second-generation immigrants and AAPI youth often find themselves struggling to navigate a dual identity. And, in addition to dealing with the stigma surrounding mental illness within our community, we're also subject to discrimination and harmful stereotypes – such as the “model minority” myth – that originate outside of it. This is all further complicated by language barriers, low rates of mental health literacy, and a lack of culturally informed care.

These factors are just a fraction of what makes mental health a pressing, intersectional issue for the AAPI community – *and* why WAVES is so committed to doing the work that we do.

Over 50%

of AAPI youth with depression
receive zero treatment



1 in 3

AAPI youth report
ongoing feelings
of sadness





PROGRAMS

From conducting original, community-engaged research to providing suicide prevention trainings and even sharing stories of AAPI resilience via documentary film screenings, WAVES offers a variety of programs to further our mission.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Equipping Our Community

As a community-based organization (CBO) we firmly believe in the power of the people. That's why, since 2021, we've been proud to offer MHFA training as one of our core programs. This program equips participants with life saving skills using an evidence-based training course that teaches them how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorder. Through the "ALGEE" action plan, participants learn how to **A**pproach, assess, and assist with risk of suicide or self-harm; **L**isten non-judgmentally; **G**ive reassurance and information; **E**ncourage appropriate professional help; and **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.

As part of our commitment to accessibility, we provide bilingual Youth and Adult MHFA training, and all our trainers are bilingual. We also use vigorous research to periodically evaluate its effectiveness and guide new interventions. For example, after our research found that knowledge dipped at 6 months, we started ALGEE peer support groups to reinforce MHFA skills. To date, we've trained 1,386 individuals using this rigorous method, and this number will continue to grow – along with countless lives quietly saved by mental health first aiders.



QPR TRAINING

Life-saving Made Mainstream

We expanded our suicide prevention efforts in 2025 with the introduction of QPR (**Q**uestion, **P**ersuade, **R**efers) trainings! Unlike the more broad framework of MHFA, QPR's acute focus on preventing suicide equips community members—from students to seniors—with the confidence to recognize warning signs, step-up in times of crisis, and engage in *direct* conversations about suicide. Across three training sessions, 25 participants completed the program, strengthening a growing network of trusted peers prepared to identify individuals in crisis and connect them to appropriate support. Nearly half of participants were college students, reflecting the increasing commitment of young people to mental health advocacy and suicide prevention.

By offering training in Chinese and English, we helped address critical barriers related to language access and cultural relevance. These efforts ensure that a growing percentage of our community is prepared to intervene when someone may be struggling. Building on this momentum, UCA WAVES is expanding the program with additional trainings to further strengthen community-based suicide prevention across the populations we serve.



STRONG MINDS PROGRAM

Increasing Care Accessibility

WAVES has always championed peer support, and in 2025 we were enabled to demonstrate that after securing funding for the Strong Minds program from UNC Greensboro and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS). This program offered free ten one-on-one sessions in a safe, confidential space with a trained Community Mental Health Worker (CHW). In these sessions, participants learned simple, practical tools to manage stress, improve mood, and get connected to local resources.

While the program didn't *officially* launch till 2026, the groundwork was laid last year. We have five Chinese speaking CHWs who are supervised by two licensed mental health providers. The program was designed for adults 18 and older and provided assistance in the participant's preferred language. Our small but skilled team met with 72 clients over the course of three and a half months, culminating in a total of 274 sessions. With stigma, cost concerns, complex healthcare systems, and a lack of culturally-sensitive treatment at play, WAVES was able to connect with some of the most vulnerable members of our community, ensuring nobody falls through the cracks.

270+

SESSIONS HELD BY OUR
CHWS TO DATE

72

NUMBER OF CLIENTS MET WITH



WAVES MAKERS

Empowering the Next Generation

WAVES Makers is an indispensable part of our mission to elevate AAPI youth. From coast to coast, our youth are making big WAVES. Close to 20 young scholars presented research and advocacy projects at our *Roots & Resilience* Conference in North Carolina, and three high school WAVES Makers presented at the 2025 American Public Health Association APHA in DC (with one bringing home a student award!). Likewise, one of our young professionals shared their experience as a guest speaker at the first Youth Mental Health Conference by the Asian American Foundation (TAAF) in San Francisco.

WAVES Makers closed out December by launching a New York City chapter! Initiated and organized entirely by local youth, participants showed up for the inaugural meeting, illustrating the spread of our organization's mission and values.

WAVES Makers symbolizes that, in a climate where youth are often made to feel powerless, their voices matter, and their advocacy creates ripples that can be felt throughout the AAPI community.



REID BOWMAN
MPH, CHES

“ WAVES Makers is run for and by the next generation of **researchers, leaders, advocates, and policy-makers** interested in AANHPI youth mental health. From **early high schoolers to young professionals**, they're starting conversations and creating change with original ideas and programs.

”

Our Programs

WAVES VILLAGE

A Network Designed to Empower

We know healing doesn't happen in isolation. As social beings, the power of positive connection cannot be understated – and WAVES Village was created to facilitate just that.

WAVES Village is a national online community offering culturally responsive peer support for AAPI individuals and families. It consists of over 50 dedicated volunteers and provides a variety of opportunities for engagement, including critically needed peer support groups, a community book club, and educational webinars. Dedicated groups support parents, LGBTQ+ families, MHFA trainees, and those seeking general wellness and connection. Through WeChat-based outreach, daily messages of encouragement, and facilitated discussions, participants receive ongoing support in a language and cultural context that feels familiar and accessible.

More than a collection of programs, WAVES Village serves as a unique, trusted community where participants can share experiences, learn from one another, and build relationships rooted in empathy and understanding.

1150+

BOOK CLUB PARTICIPANTS
ACROSS SESSIONS IN 2025

21

BOOK CLUB SESSIONS
HELD IN 2025

43

TRAINED VOLUNTEERS



Our Programs

SILENT WAR DOCUMENTARY

Finding Healing Through Film

Few things rival the multifaceted power of storytelling, which is why UCA WAVES has been honored to help support the production and dissemination of award-winning filmmaker Changfu Chang's latest project, *Silent War: Asian American Reckonings with Mental Health*, produced by WAVES Executive Director Lily Chen.

Told through the deeply personal stories of individuals and families – including a young Chinese American woman who survived several suicide attempts, a mother reckoning with her daughter's bipolar disorder, an established Korean newscaster accused of being “too Asian,” and a Sikh family haunted by a father's unresolved pain – the documentary exposes the quiet suffering beneath the model minority myth and interrogates how cultural stigma, intergenerational trauma, racism, and systemic neglect have shaped the emotional landscape of our community.

Since its premiere at our *Roots & Resilience* conference last September, *Silent War* has gone on to win several awards, moving audiences and sparking dialogue across the country.

12+

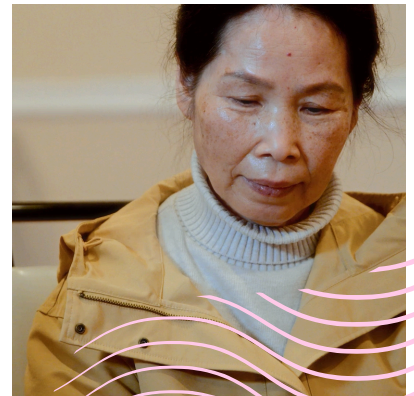
SCREENINGS SINCE IT'S
RELEASE AND COUNTING)





LOGLINE

There is a crisis in our community,
and we need to talk about it.



SYNOPSIS

Asian American Reckonings with Mental Health is a groundbreaking documentary that confronts the deep silence surrounding mental illness in Asian American communities. Through intimate stories of struggle, survival, and healing, the film explores how cultural stigma, intergenerational trauma, racism, and systemic neglect have shaped the mental health experiences of families from diverse Asian backgrounds. Featuring raw personal testimonies, expert insights, and emotional family reckonings, *Silent War* reveals the human cost of staying silent — and the power of breaking that silence. At once personal and political, the film charts a collective journey from shame to resilience, offering hope for a more inclusive and compassionate mental health future.

www.silentwarmovie.com

EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Putting the 'E' In WAVES

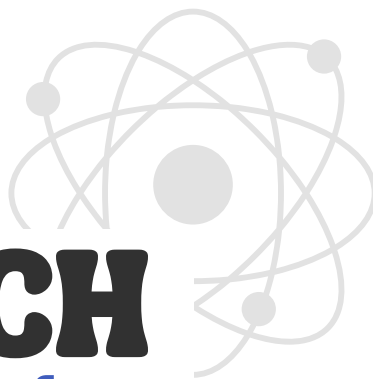


Through community-centered workshops, we create opportunities for individuals, families, educators, healthcare providers, and advocates to engage in meaningful conversations about mental health, well-being, and healing.

Our workshops bring together mental health professionals, community leaders, and individuals with lived experience to explore topics such as youth mental health, parenting, intergenerational relationships, stigma reduction, trauma, and access to care. By combining evidence-based information with personal stories and facilitated dialogue, these programs help participants better understand mental health challenges while building practical skills to support themselves and others.

Over the years, WAVES workshops have reached communities across the country, bringing together diverse audiences to learn, connect, and take action. Whether through conferences, community forums, parent education events, or specialized trainings, these programs help bridge cultural and generational divides, strengthen community support networks, and empower participants to become advocates for mental health in their own families and communities.





OUR RESEARCH

Going Where Data Hasn't Before

Too often, AAPI communities are overlooked in the wider field of health research, leaving critical questions about mental health, healthcare access, and care needs unanswered. We believe that statistics, much like stories, can grant a powerful voice to these neglected communities. Guided by the principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us," WAVES works to generate data that reflects the experiences, challenges, and strengths of AAPI experience.

Through authentic and prolonged community engagement, partnerships with academic institutions, and youth-led inquiry, WAVES examines issues ranging from mental health stigma and help-seeking behaviors to suicide prevention, refugee experiences, and healthcare access. In 2025, our team continued to analyze and share findings from multiple studies, presented research at national conferences, and advanced publications focused on MHFA, AAPI health disparities, and community mental health needs.

For WAVES, research and advocacy are two sides of the same coin. By weaving data with lived experience, we aim to uncover evidence that informs programs, influences policy, and strengthens efforts to improve mental health and well-being for AAPI communities.



Year **HIGHLIGHTS**

WAVES had an unforgettable year filled with events that inspired, organization firsts, and a blossoming of community partnerships. Intrigued? Let's dive in!

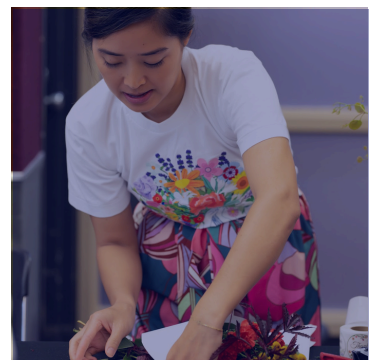
ROOTS & RESILIENCE

A Milestone Gathering for WAVES

In September, WAVES hosted its inaugural conference, *Roots & Resilience: The Power of Data & Stories to Advance AAPI Youth Mental Health*. The event brought together nearly 300 youth, parents, clinicians, educators, policymakers, and community leaders, creating a space where research, heritage, and community action came together to address the challenges facing AAPI youth and their families.

Attendees explored 10 sessions showcasing national and local research, participated in wellness and cultural activities, engaged with youth-led presentations, and heard powerful stories of resilience and healing. The conference also featured the premiere of *Silent War: Asian American Reckonings with Mental Health*, leaving not one dry eye in the room!

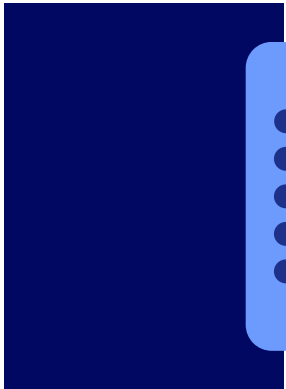
By bringing together voices across generations and sectors, *Roots & Resilience* strengthened partnerships, uplifted youth, and reinforced a shared commitment to improving AAPI wellbeing.



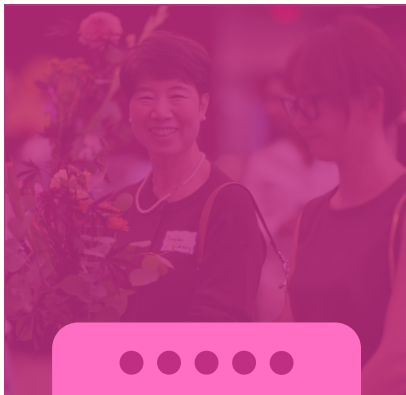
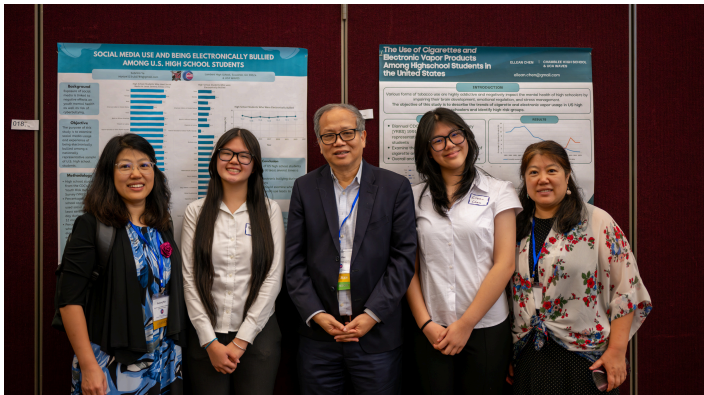


300
CONFERENCE GOERS

11
DIVERSE SESSIONS



25
YOUTH RESEARCH
PRESENTATIONS



AAPI HEALTH PRIORITIES STUDY

Conducting Community-Driven Data

Supported by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, we launched a statewide study to better understand the health needs, barriers, and strengths of AAPI communities across North Carolina. Through surveys, interviews, focus groups, listening sessions, and secondary data analysis, the project platformed voices that are often missing from health research.

The study revealed persistent barriers to care, including language access challenges, mental health stigma, cost concerns, and difficulties navigating healthcare systems. Participants also identified education, community support, and culturally responsive services as pertinent to improving health and well-being. The project further highlighted the limitations of existing data, reinforcing the need for community-driven research to ensure AAPI communities are accurately represented. Currently, final report and multiple manuscripts are being prepared. By combining research with lived experience, this work is helping inform future programs, policies, and solutions that advance health equity statewide.





6 RESEARCH AIMS

- 1. Secondary Data Analysis:** Demographics, healthcare access, and health behaviors of AAPI populations in North Carolina.
- 2. Listening Sessions:** 4 groups (Chinese, Cantonese, Karen; N=48) to capture community perspectives.
- 3. Focus Groups:** 4 groups (Karen, Chinese, other Asian communities; N=44).
- 4. Individual Interviews:** 23 interviews with Karen parents and youth on trauma, mental health, and resilience.
- 5. Survey:** 52-page survey (Chinese & Karen, N=419).
- 6. Video Project:** Visual storytelling initiative.

Let's dive in! →



SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS



We analyzed AAPI demographics, health behaviors, and access to care in North Carolina (NC) using ACS, BRFSS, and Census data.

- **NC Asian population:** 325,670 (3.1% of NC's total population).
- **Key groups:** Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean.
- **67% of NC Asians** are foreign-born; 27% report limited English proficiency.
- **Next Steps:** Trend analysis and healthcare access review.

This revealed...

- Asian Americans reported **better overall health** and higher insurance coverage than the general U.S. population, yet were **less likely to receive routine checkups or flu shots**, pointing to non-cost barriers to care.
- Asian Americans reported **lower levels of social and emotional support and higher race-related stress**, including physical symptoms linked to race-based treatment.
- National surveys (e.g., BRFSS) **lack sufficient Asian American sample sizes—especially in NC—and do not allow for ethnic subgroup analysis**, highlighting the need for community-based, disaggregated research.



LISTENING SESSIONS (N=48)



We held community listening sessions to identify mental health priorities and cultural barriers.

- **4 sessions (N=48):** Chinese (1), Cantonese (1), Karen (2).
- **IRB approved** by NCCU.
- **Themes:** stigma, community strengths, and culturally specific needs.

3 FOCUS GROUP (N=44)



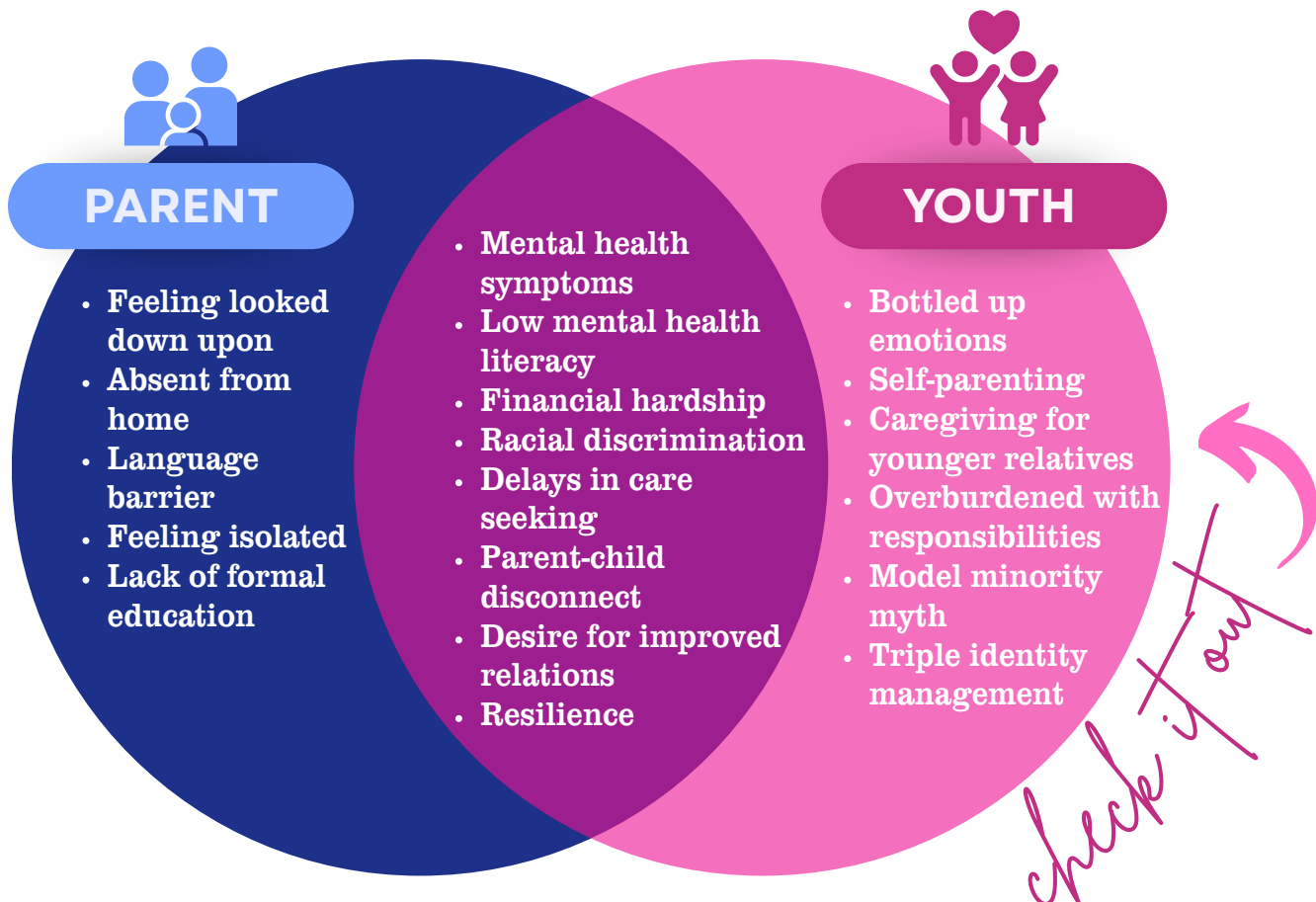
Focus groups were conducted to deepen insights into AAPI experiences.

- **4 groups** (N=44): Karen (2), Chinese (1), Other Asian (1).
- **IRB approved** by NCCU.
- **Topics:** mental health access, intergenerational challenges, cultural identity.
- **Data analysis** plan developed, and data analysis in progress

4 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS (N=23)



We conducted individual interviews with 12 parents and 11 youth primarily consisting of Karen refugees. This yielded invaluable insight into the various challenges this group faces, especially as it relates to identity, resilience, relationships, systemic barriers, trauma and mental health. Below, you can find a Venn diagram outlining overlapping findings.

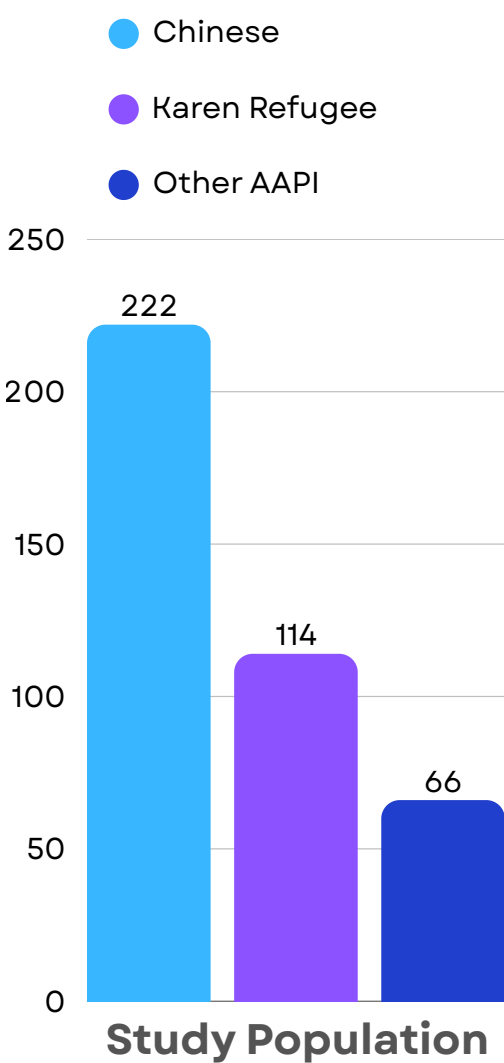


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SURVEY (N=419)



Data collection was completed on October 5, 2025. Preliminary findings were compiled into a 42-page survey, which was translated into Chinese and Karen. Participants were recruited through 13 community partners, and in-person assistance was provided for individuals with limited or no English proficiency. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UNC Chapel Hill. Final survey results will be available in September.



Survey Findings

- Having a regular provider and current insurance: Karen lower than that of Chinese and other AAPI respondents.
- Community health priorities were strongly centered on **mental health awareness, cost of care**, stigma, culturally grounded beliefs, and the need for education and community support.
- **Perceived stress** was highest in the Other AAPI group and lowest among Karen respondents; subgroup differences in age, socioeconomic position, and missingness.
- **Discrimination** was attributed to race/ethnicity and accent or English proficiency, with **workplace**, interpersonal, and shopping settings among the most frequent reported locations.

KEY FINDINGS

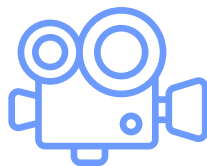
Healthcare Access · Health Priorities · Perceived Stress · Discrimination

Community Level · Health System Level · Research & Policy

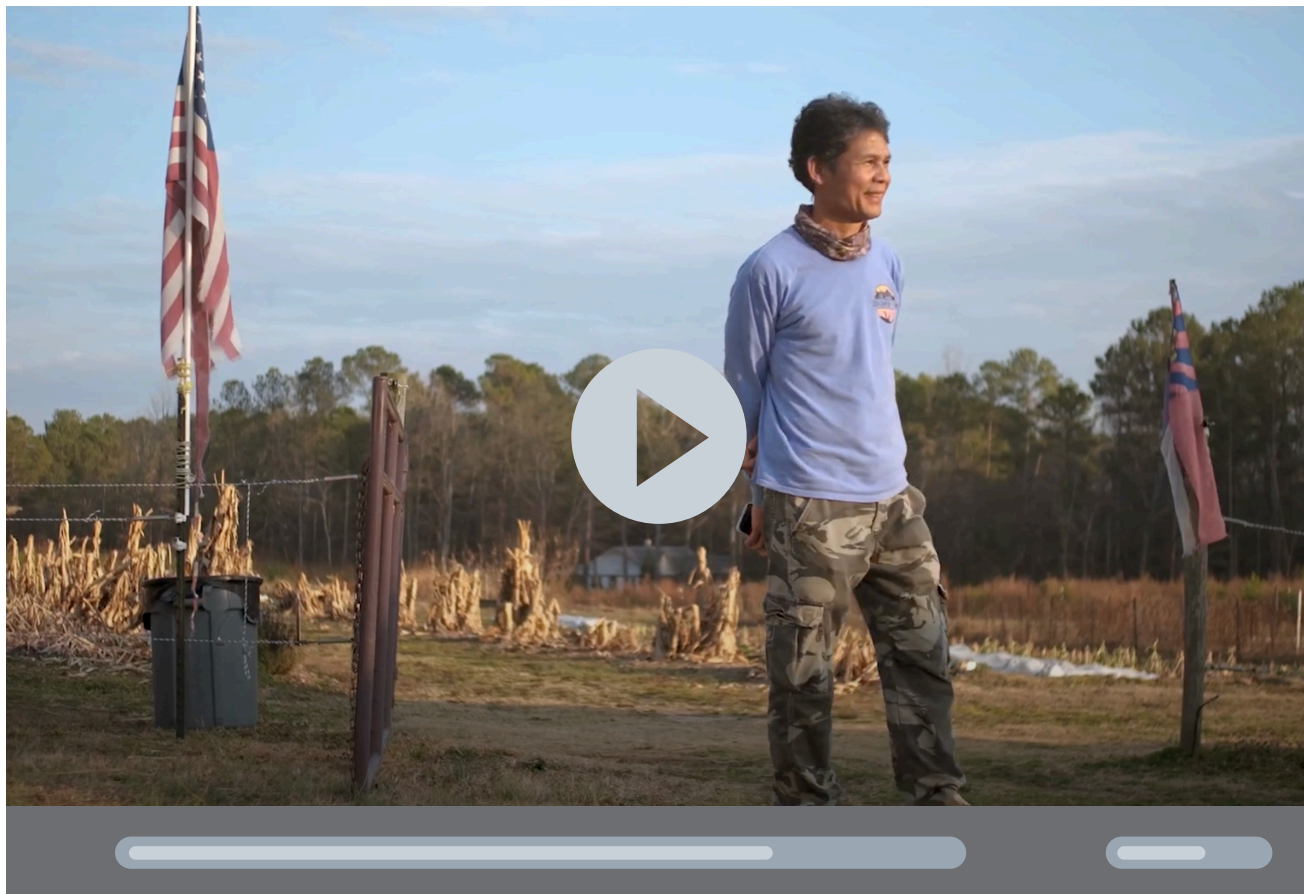
IMPLICATIONS

6

VIDEO PROJECT



Home Burma is a short documentary that explores the meaning of home through the experiences of Karen refugees from Burma rebuilding their lives on a small farm in North Carolina—one crop and one memory at a time.

**Want to Watch?**

Interested in seeing *Home Burma*? You're in luck! Scan the QR code or visit the link below to view now.

<https://tinyurl.com/332fdc77>



TAAF CONFERENCE

Leading with Lived Experience

In 2025, UCA WAVES joined more than 200 leaders, practitioners, advocates, and young people at The Asian American Foundation's inaugural AAPI Youth Mental Health Summit in San Francisco. The event brought together organizations from across the country to discuss solutions to the growing mental health challenges facing AAPI youth.

Representing WAVES, Grant Manager Reid Bowman, MPH, CHES served as a panelist in the opening session *Beyond the Surface: Stories Beneath the Numbers*, which explored key findings from TAAF's landmark youth mental health report and highlighted the lived experiences behind the data.

The summit provided an opportunity to share the work of WAVES, learn from national leaders, and contribute to important conversations about culturally responsive support, belonging, and mental well-being. By participating in these national discussions, WAVES continues to elevate the voices and experiences of AAPI youth and families.



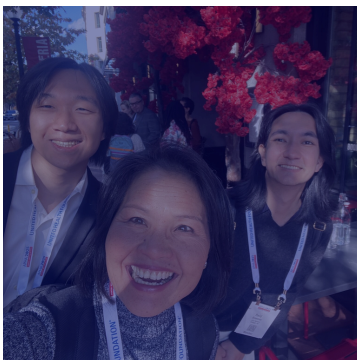
APHA CONFERENCE

Recognizing the Power of Research

In November 2025, members of the UCA WAVES team presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Conference, joining thousands of public health leaders, researchers, and advocates from across the country. The conference provided an opportunity to share our work, strengthen partnerships, and engage in national conversations on health equity and collective well-being.

A highlight of the conference was the recognition of 15-year-old WAVES researcher Ellean Chen, who received the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus Best Student Abstract Award. Her achievement reflects the power of mentorship, youth engagement, and the next generation of leaders advancing public health and mental health awareness.

The conference reinforced WAVES' commitment to developing future changemakers, fostering community partnerships, and bringing innovative ideas back to the communities we serve.



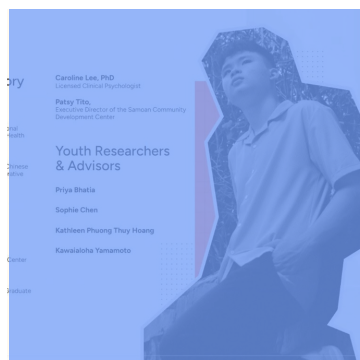
WEBINARS

Making WAVES on the Web

Throughout the year, UCA WAVES hosted webinars that connected diverse audiences with trusted experts and practical resources.

One of our largest programs, a parent education webinar led by Dr. G. Julie Xie, brought together 407 parents from 29 states to explore strategies for strengthening parent-child relationships and raising resilient, confident children. We also partnered with The Asian American Foundation (TAAF) to present findings from *Beyond the Surface*, helping community members better understand the mental health experiences of AANHPI youth and the actions needed to support them.

Additional webinars addressed topics including intergenerational communication, emotional wellness for older adults, and coping with trauma following acts of violence. By making culturally responsive education accessible online, we continue to reach individuals and families nationwide with knowledge, support, and – most importantly – hope.



Year Highlights

AFSP PODCAST FEATURE

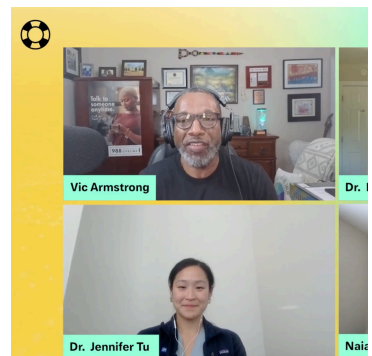
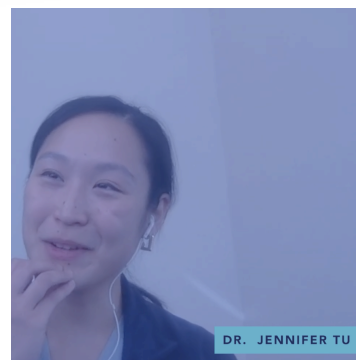
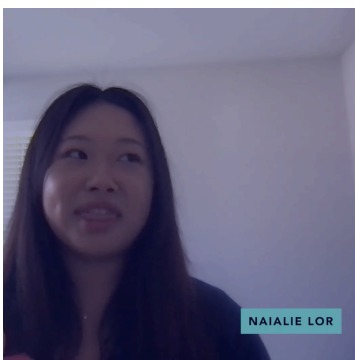
Collaborations for Change

In 2025, UCA WAVES partnered with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) to record a special podcast roundtable exploring AAPI mental health and the importance of bridging generational and cultural divides. Hosted by Victor Armstrong, the conversation featured Executive Director Lily Chen, Dr. Jennifer Tu, and Naialie Lor, who shared professional expertise alongside personal experiences navigating stigma, identity, and mental health within AAPI families.

The discussion highlighted how culturally grounded storytelling can foster understanding, reduce stigma, and inspire meaningful change. Although the episode was released in early 2026, the collaboration reflects WAVES' continued commitment to elevating community voices and advancing national conversations around AAPI mental health.

<https://tinyurl.com/47trye9y>

watch now





PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Leading with Purpose

We're beyond proud to share that our fearless Executive Director, Lily Chen, received the prestigious 2025 Robert E. Bryan Public Service Award from UNC!

Presented by the Carolina Center for Public Service, this award honors Lily's strong leadership and ongoing dedication to youth mental health, especially in the Chinese and broader AAPI communities. Her work has been a force of healing, visibility, and real change at both the local and national levels.

During her speech, she shared, "It truly takes a village to tackle such a complex health problem like suicide prevention... This honor isn't just about me. It's about every young person who deserves to be seen, supported, and heard."

In her own words, "Our story matters because immigrant stories are also American stories." Here's to celebrating AAPI leadership!



Get INVOLVED

Feeling inspired by WAVES' mission? Great news: We're always looking for others to join us in our journey making an ocean of impact. Here's some ways you can uplift and support WAVES!

Get Involved

A DONATION THAT MAKES A *Difference*

Every day, Asian American individuals and families face mental health challenges in silence—often navigating stigma, language barriers, and a lack of culturally responsive care. Your support helps UCA WAVES change that. Through bilingual Mental Health First Aid trainings, peer support networks like WAVES Village, educational workshops, or powerful storytelling initiatives like *Silent War*, we're creating safe spaces for healing, connection, and hope. Every donation helps us reach more people, break cycles of silence, and move closer to a future where no one has to struggle alone.

WAVES TO GIVE



DONATE USING **CREDIT CARD**

Donate securely online through Zeffy with zero processing fees, so 100% of your donation goes to UCA WAVES!



DONATE THROUGH **ZELLE**

If you have Zelle, you can send your donation quickly and securely to treasurer@ucawaves.org.



DONATE BY **CHECK**

Make checks payable to UCA WAVES and mail them to PO Box 852, Apex, NC 27502. Include your name and email in the memo line.



scan me!

Scan the QR code to be taken to our donation page.

Get Involved

Our SERVICES

As an effort to expand our impact and increase sustainability, WAVES offers a variety of our programs in a fee-for-service format for organizations, institutions, individuals and businesses. Whatever you need, we work for *and* with you to make it happen.



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA)

Bilingual MHFA trainings offered in English & Chinese that teach community members to recognize, understand, and respond to mental health challenges.



FILM SCREENINGS

Curated screenings of *Silent War* and other UCA WAVES films, paired with facilitated discussions to spark awareness and dialogue.



PEER SUPPORT

UCA WAVES Village provides culturally responsive, bilingual peer-support from trained volunteers to foster empathy and empowerment.



CONFERENCE & EDUCATION SESSIONS

Workshops, panels, and trainings that equip providers, students, and community leaders with tools to address AAPI mental health.



RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Community-based research that identifies AAPI health needs and informs strategies for equity, well-being, and systems change.

Get Involved

An Opportunity for Everyone

Now more than ever, we need community – and one of the best ways to build it is through volunteering

Not only is volunteering linked to improved mental and physical health, but it's also a wonderful way to create new personal and professional connections (or to deepen existing ones). As a nonprofit, we're proud to have a dedicated, diverse group of professionals, parents, students and community members who selflessly come together to help us do what we do – and we'd be honored for you to join that team!

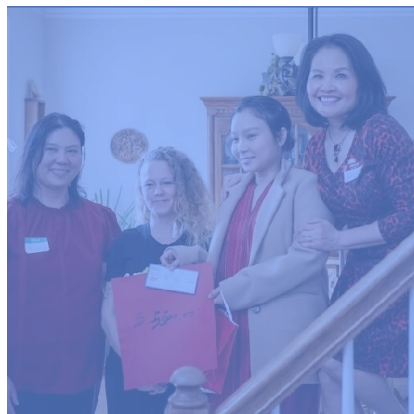
Whether it's tabling at outreach events, leading trainings, or something in between, WAVES has something for everyone. If you'd like to work with us, we're happy to find something that fits your passions and talents. Interested? Contact info@ucawaves.org or visit our website.



VOLUNTEER WITH US!



Get Involved



CONNECT *with* US!

Stay up to date with all things UCA WAVES! Scan the QR code to be taken to our LinkTree. There, you can find links to our social media, website, monthly newsletter and more!



@ucawaves



@wavesuca4408



@uca-waves



@ucawaves

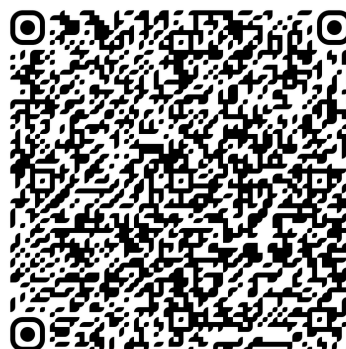


@uca.waves



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scan me!

2025 SOCIAL media STATS

623%

Increase in content interactions on Facebook

139

New followers on LinkedIn



25k+

Views on Instagram, with a 130% increase in reach

839

WeChat Blog Shares



9,895

WeChat Blog Views

48

WeChat Blog Posts Published

26k

Impressions on LinkedIn

100%

Increase in content interactions on Instagram



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR AMAZING PARTNERS & FUNDERS



BlueCross BlueShield of
North Carolina Foundation



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES



TRIANGLE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



SAMHSA
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JULIAN
GRACE
FOUNDATION



The
Asian American
Foundation



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



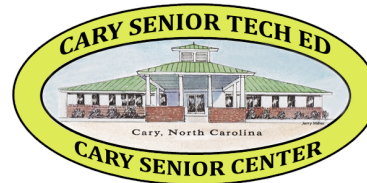
nami North
Carolina
National Alliance on Mental Illness



Clinical Scholars
Action Network



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MHACC
Mental Health
Association for Chinese
Communities



NORTH CAROLINA
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Emotional Wellness



National Alliance on Mental Illness



