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Throughout the course of this fellowship, I have explored more of my identity as a Chinese-American than I ever had. Prior to starting this fellowship, Chinese-American was a term I was uncomfortable using to describe myself. I did not believe these words go together because from my experience, being Chinese and being American were two very different things. It was not until watching the Asian-American documentary by PBS when I realized that our history on this land goes back more than 200 years. Discovering the stories of these individuals that went through a treacherous journey to achieve the American dream reminded me of my own parents. It is a common story shared by all immigrants. The struggle to survive in a foreign land while combating feelings of homesickness and loneliness is a reality that many have gone through to make ends meet. America is still very much a white person's narrative. However, these brave men and women have proved that despite the opposition, one can still rise above. Watching the documentary put into perspective how Asian-American communities have been intertwined with mainstream American history every step of the way. Although much of our history is not taught in schools, it should not be forgotten and diminished through time. One of the many things I learned during this fellowship is that it is essential to learn about the past to better understand yourself.

I have also acquired skills and knowledge from other aspects of this fellowship such as the virtual learning sessions, phone/text banking, facilitating listening sessions, and conducting one-on-one interviews. The virtual learning sessions through zoom were informative and provided an unique opportunity for me to further evaluate myself. I have benefited greatly from participating in many of the virtual sessions because it provided extensive information on topics like power and oppression, movements in the making, community cultural wealth, and model minority myth. The learning sessions demystified many topics that were previously shrouded in ambiguity. I gained an in-depth understanding of our society through lenses from different perspectives. In addition, the experience I obtained with phone banking helped me get more involved with campaigns in the local area. Local electoral politics are just as important as more prominent races like the presidential election. Often, local politics do not receive as much attention and coverage from the media compared to bigger races even though local elections are more likely to impact the everyday life of ordinary citizens. Because of this, I have plans to be more involved in local politics by completing internships for campaigns that I believe has the public's best interest at heart. I will use the experience from phone banking and carry it over. Similarly, facilitating listening sessions and conducting one-on-one interviews taught me how to be a leader during conversations. An important skill I acquired during the role of a facilitator was how to encourage participants to speak up. I found that prompting individuals to participate by asking other questions that are relevant to the main question is quite effective. Starting small is always not a bad idea. During one-on-one interviews, I learned how to alleviate anxiety or nervousness the other party may have. Starting with small talk makes easing into serious topics easier. These can be important skills to have when conducting surveys with other people. I learned valuable skills that are vital to self-development.

One way that I plan on applying the skills I took away is to encourage my friends and family to engage in the upcoming election. The first step I plan on taking is to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote has registered to do so. I intend on focusing on social media outreach to inform my friends. This includes activities such as hanging a flyer on my story, individually contacting people through methods of DMing, and calling people to have a conversation on the phone. If anyone needs help or resources registering to vote, I will connect them with organizations that will be able to provide help. In the near future, I wish to start a club at school that encourages civic engagement among young people. I plan on working on more campaigns to help get the right people in office for the betterment of our community. A support network would also be great for people that are struggling to navigate our system.

Overall, I have had a great experience working with Rising Voices of Asian-American Families. This has been such a great opportunity for me to explore my voice and to understand what it means to be Asian-American. I met some amazing people and I plan to stay active with Rising Voices by continuing to phonebank and to participate in any future projects.