

a year's overview

WHERE WE ARE NOW

For 26 years, **South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)** has served the critical needs of low-income, immigrant youth across New York City. This past year and a half proved the resilience and dedication of our youth and staff. Living in neighborhoods at the epicenter of the pandemic, our community experienced great hardship and heartache, facing high numbers of recorded COVID cases, unemployment and job loss, and food insecurity. Our young people also grappled with increased responsibilities such as caring for siblings and other family members, or securing work to supplement family income, on top of managing school work and college applications.

On March 16th, 2020, with the closure of New York City schools and institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SAYA quickly pivoted virtually to continue delivering high-quality programming and launched new initiatives that better served our youth. In addition to regular programming, SAYA staff members expanded health and wellness efforts

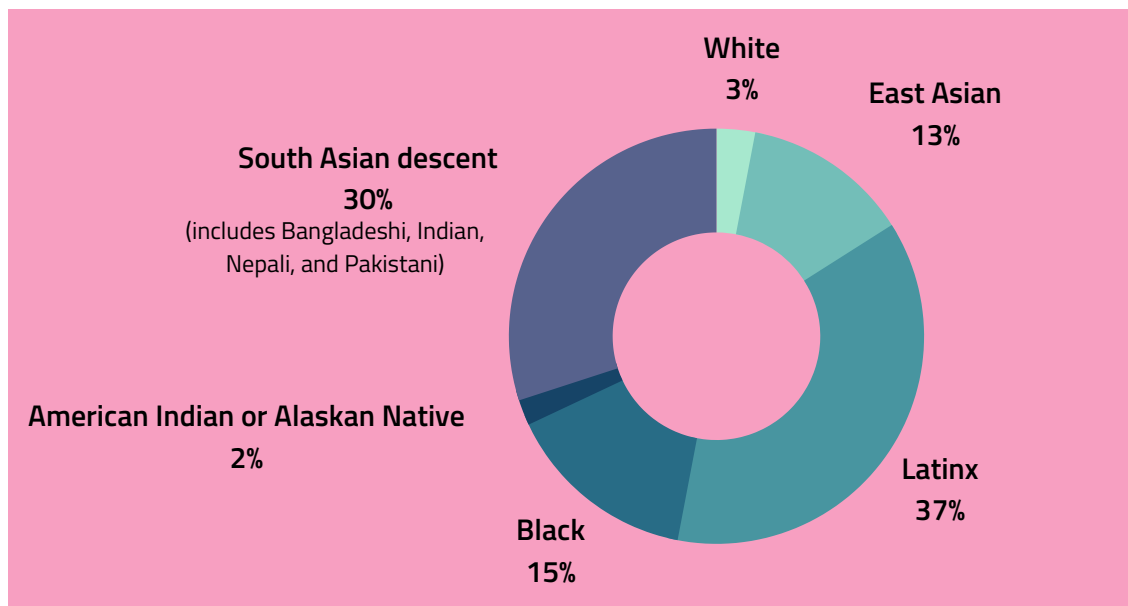
through increased one-on-one check-ins and small group discussions. Our team created virtual clubs and events to help our youth decompress and connect with friends, and curated and shared an in-depth, online resource list - that included finances, housing, food services, and much more. While this pandemic and many of its related challenges may continue for some time, SAYA remains a steadfast resource. We are proud of our team's ability to quickly organize and smoothly transition to virtual learning, which allowed us to remain a trusted support system for our youth and community.

Our Elmhurst community center reopened in September 2020, offering a hybrid mix of virtual and in-person programming, before returning to full in-person offerings in September 2021. Throughout the uncertainty of the past year and a half, SAYA has proudly remained a vital, safe, and welcoming space.

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 1,200 youth benefitted from our offerings across all eight of our program sites - seven elementary, middle, and high schools, and our Elmhurst-based community center.
 - SAYA applied for and received foundation funding totaling over \$100,000 that enabled us to provide direct assistance grants to 80 SAYA families experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic.
 - In addition to our regular programming, we increased our wellness efforts, one-on-one youth meetings, and enrichment activities to help youth practice self-care and reduce stress.
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- In March 2021, SAYA received funding to launch a peer mentoring program at our community center. Our model connects our current youth in high school with SAYA college student mentors to cover a range of topics including building social and emotional skills, leadership development, and academic and professional support through one-on-one and group sessions, tutoring, and activities.
 - In May 2021, SAYA partnered with volunteers from PricewaterhouseCoopers to provide career-based mentorship to our community center youth. PwC volunteers are connecting with youth to share their professional knowledge and work through a career focused curriculum provided by SAYA.

THE YOUTH WE SERVE



48% were born outside the United States

91% have at least one parent who was also born abroad

93% are eligible for free or reduced lunches at their schools

77% come from families with a combined annual income of \$50,000 or less

15% are currently on public assistance or food stamps

OVERVIEW AND MISSION

South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) is an inclusive, South Asian-focused 501(c)3 youth development organization. Through our innovative, holistic approach, we work toward education equity by providing opportunities and resources to less privileged New York City youth, ensuring they are empowered academically, emotionally, and socially to become engaged community members.

Established in 1996, SAYA has grown into a \$3.8 million organization currently serving over 1,400 youth each year through programming at eight NYC schools and our community center in Elmhurst, Queens. SAYA is committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging and ensuring that each of our program sites serve as safe and brave spaces where all young people feel valued, culturally affirmed, and welcomed.

OUR YOUTH

SAYA youth come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. Many are first- and second-generation immigrant youth of color who face numerous barriers that hinder their chances to be academically and socially successful, graduate high school and attend college. These young people live in under-resourced neighborhoods and attend schools that are ill equipped to meet their special needs related to language and acculturation. In addition, many first-generation parents confront language barriers, societal obstacles, and a lack of familiarity with American culture and the education system. As a result, they are at a disadvantage when it comes to helping their children navigate the complexities of adolescence growing up in the United States. Taking our youth's individual abilities and challenges into account, SAYA works to meet their needs and improve outcomes through personalized and meaningful mentorship and guidance.

OUR PROGRAM MODEL

SAYA takes a comprehensive approach to youth development - one that believes youth thrive when they have safe spaces to learn, lead and contribute to their communities. Our free year-round programming includes leadership and identity development; academic support, career exploration, college access and success programming; and sports, wellness, and STEAM activities. Recognizing that most of our youth are at a disadvantage when it comes to navigating their educational careers, we have developed a strategic and targeted approach to meeting their needs by cultivating an inclusive, multicultural environment and providing culturally competent and sensitive programming and activities.

We implement a social and emotional learning approach, as substantial research has shown these programs result in improved academic performance and behaviors, and less negative behaviors and emotional distress.¹ We offer a variety of tailored programming that aims to increase social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies. Current youth development research and our learnings

from over two decades of work have shown these skills enable young people to understand and manage emotions and actions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. These benefits are reflected in success in high school and college, and are carried into adulthood, better positioning youth to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

In addition to our Elmhurst-based community center, we provide programming at eight elementary, middle, and high schools in Queens and Brooklyn, which are located in Astoria, Glen Oaks, Glendale, Jamaica, Ozone Park, South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, and Kensington, Brooklyn. We have provided programming at all of these schools for over six years, with two of these partnerships dating over 10 years. At each of these sites, we provide academic and leadership programming curated to meet the specific needs of the student population. We work closely with each school and community, as well as with parents and guardians to ensure that the academic and social needs of their children are being met.

¹Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.

WHERE WE SERVE

Elementary School

P.S. 124 Osmond A. Church
129-15 150th Avenue
South Ozone Park, NY 11420

P.S. 230 Doris L. Cohen
1 Albemarle Road
Brooklyn, NY 11218

Middle School

Central Queens Academy
88-24 Myrtle Avenue
Glendale, NY 11385

Irwin Altman Middle School 172
81-14 257th Street
Glen Oaks, NY 11004

J.H.S. 202 Robert H. Goddard
138-30 Lafayette Street
Ozone Park, NY 11420

Our World Neighborhood
Charter School
31-20 37th Street
Astoria, NY 11103

High School

Elmhurst Center
54-05 Seabury Street
Elmhurst, NY 11373

Richmond Hill High School
89-30 114th Street
Richmond Hill, NY 11419

Thomas A. Edison Career and
Technical Education High School
165-65 84th Avenue
Jamaica, NY 11432

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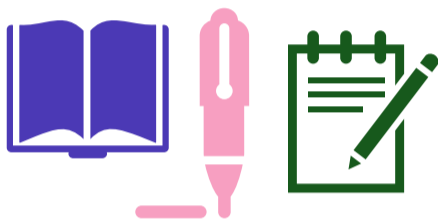
South Asian Youth Action

Aims to foster a strong sense of belonging in youth and provide them with tools to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

2020-2021 IMPACT

1,750

youth in kindergarten to college served

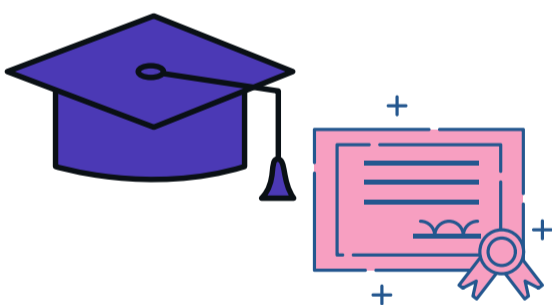


82%

of high school youth showed improvement in reading, writing, and/or speaking

\$216,000

in scholarship funds awarded to 22 youth

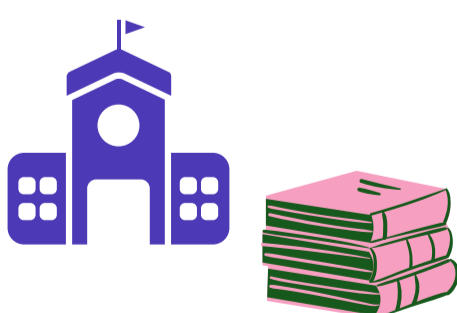


97%

of college students on track to graduate in 5 years

4.4 OUT OF 5.0

average engagement level (measuring enjoyment and learning) of SAYA youth in kindergarten to 8th grade



100%

of college access cohort accepted to college

26

years helping youth belong grow, and thrive

