

2022 Future Star Program Closing Ceremony

By: Alvin Tong

On the 11th of August in 2022, a closing ceremony was conducted to celebrate the success of the Future Star Program (FSP). The goal of FSP is to create the next generation of leaders. Following dinner, the ceremony began with the welcoming by the FSP board. Xinzhi Zhang, a co-founder of FSP congratulated the highschoolers on their successful journey. He thanked all the staff, parents, mentors, and volunteers for all their support. To end his remarks, he gave words of inspiration on the question: what is the meaning of life? In which he responded, “Life is not defined by what college you go to or how much money you make, it’s really who you are.”

Next, Dr. Vivian Chen (president of AAGEN), the event keynote speaker, used the Apollo 13 crisis as an example to convey a strong message, that by combining strengths and sharing different perspectives one can solve challenging problems. She also stated that we should develop a diversified and inclusive community. Dr. Chen’s powerful speech inspired many students.

Allison Chen gave the student keynote speaker speech in which she shows sincere appreciation to everyone who supported the FSP.

Following opening remarks, the 3 teams of FSP, Team Rushmore, Team Everest, and Team Mt. Fuji presented their projects. The presentation included their planning, struggles, and success. Team Rushmore hosted an event where more than 35 volunteers planted more than 900 flowers in Frederick. Team Mt. Fuji hosted a Science 4 Fun event where more than 60 elementary students conducted cool hands-on science experiments. This motivated the kids to explore more science. Team Everest hosted a contest through social media, encouraging teens from around the country to talk about mental health and to share their stories. The details of these events are described in the following sections.

Kelvin Xu, another co-founder of FSP, announced the students and the FSP board who received certificates and awards congratulating them on their accomplishments. The ceremony ended with closing remarks by Katherine Toth (president of FAPAC) wishing everyone a successful and bright future.

For Earth!

By: Alvin Tong, Angie Shen

On Sunday May 15, the VOU Mt. Rushmore team and Green Team Urbana partnered with high school students from the Future Stars* program to plant flowers on a popular walkway. The Future Stars Program is a program for Asian American high school students organized by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC). It links students with employees in the federal government and provides them with mentorship and career advice. One aspect of the community service program is the environmental protection and planting, in which groups of students plan and execute an initiative to help improve their community.

In this event, close to 800 native plants are waiting to be planted by the 30 plus volunteers. The high school students from the Future Stars* program was Ahbi, Rocky, Justin, and Rachael. Ahbi says, “We decided the problem we wanted to address was climate change.” Climate change increases the frequency of natural disasters, destroys habitats, harms animals,

etc. Climate change is a global issue, but if we work together, little by little we can help improve the situation through planting flowers.

Why should you help and how can you help? Helping to make an impact on our environment and making it healthier and beautiful is important. Planting flowers helps the environment. It benefits wildlife, reduces erosion, and helps with pollination. Green Team Urbana, The Future Stars* program, and many other organizations are organizing events locally, and the best part is that no experience or minimal equipment is needed!

For more information please visit: greenteamurbana.com to sign up and see future events. Correlation, coordination, collaboration.

Science is FUN

By: Alvin Tong

It was a bright sunny day on the 23rd of July. The Sci 4 Fun event sponsored by FAPAC Future Star Program and co-organized with Eco-Swift was held in Black Hill Regional Park attracting more than 60 young scientists. Science experiments were being set up while tutors helped children through the experiments. The science experiments included microscope experiments, origami experiments, acid base experiments, bubbles made of baking soda, 3D cell models, candy 3D helical DNA model, volcano and earthquake models, and the unpopable balloon. The children's favorite experiment was the candy 3D helical DNA model because the kid's love learning science and eating some sweet candy. On the other side, kids were attempting to insert skewers through the bottom and top of a balloon without it popping by dipping it in vegetable oil. The "Unpopable Balloon" amazed the young children. After one skewer was inserted, many challenged themselves and continued inserting skewers. Some kids inserted more than 10 skewers! The girls preferred the flower origami that bloomed in the water, while the boys preferred the volcano and earthquake models. While the event was coming to an end, the students who had done all the experiments and gained stamps would get crystal growing kits as a reward. "Science is Fun!" "I want to be a scientist!" It appears that this event has planted in their hearts the seeds of interest in science and continued exploration.

Project Bridge

By: Angie Shen, Allison Fan

The members of Project Bridge were Allison, Thomas, Kieu, Suwen, Jesse, Injoo and Kelly. Their personal experiences with mental health, as well as the rising international mental health crisis, led them to create Project Bridge. The Project Bridge website is a safe space where teens can talk about their mental health stories and write informative posts about mental health. The website also provide links to important mental health resources and hotlines, such as the suicide prevention hotline. In addition to their website, the team also launched a national multimedia contest sponsored by FAPAC and CLUSA encouraging teens to share their stories about mental health through writing, art, and videos. Submissions came from all across the US, including Maryland, Virginia, New jersey, Florida, Nebraska, Texas, Illinois, Atlanta, Maine, and Minnesota, and discussed a wide variety of topics such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, Tourette's syndrome and childhood trauma. The contest had 18 winners total. The website with the blog posts and winning submissions can be found here. Bridge spread the news of their

contest was through Newsletters, Instagram Promotion (through posts and stories, 386 ad taps and 484 website taps) and the support from FAPAC and CLUSA.