

# Project Rise-Together Enchanted Rock Summary

By Gloria Wu

To ACAN Board Of Directors,

## Executive Summary:

**Project Rise Together is an initiative to help less fortunate kids and to bridge the gap between different cultures in an outdoor setting.** During the week of April 9-11 2021, 11 ACAN youth were able to go camping with 27 kids from Children of the King (COK) in the Enchanted Rock State Park. During the trip, we were able to connect with youth that we otherwise never would have been able to. ACAN funds and member donations were able to cover most of the costs.

**The project has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the participants, their parents and the community in large.** After the campout, ACAN Youth continue to visit and volunteer at COK's center. In addition, we are planning for Camp Rise Together in June in New Mexico.

**ACAN's generosity has not only benefited our community and less fortunate kids, but also casted a vision for all Asian American communities.** People from Boston are asking us to help them organize a similar event and we are excited for a future when youth from all ethnical backgrounds can have this type of experience and really get to know each other and as a result, we can rise together.

## Key Accomplishments:

1. Overall the event went according to plan. No one got injured and it was a very pleasant experience.
2. All ACAN youth were able to reach out and become friends with the other kids.
3. The event had a profound impact on the youth and their parents, as well as many people from our community - see the appendix for quotes.

## Things to improve:

1. **Be more intentional:** we shared the expectations before the trip and encouraged ACAN kids to not just hang out with ACAN kids. We did a good job overall, but we still stuck together for a lot of the time.
2. **The ratio:** there was a 3:1 ratio of COK kids and ACAN youth. This made it harder to connect with everyone.
3. **Culture:** in the future, it would be nice if we could incorporate an activity where we can share our different cultures.

## Future plans:

### On-going Partnership

- Our youth can go to COK's Center to volunteer and hang out with their kids.
- Meals: we can make some Chinese meals and bring to their Friday night meetings
- Donation: we can gather donations of items that they can use (toys, electronics, shoes, clothes etc.)
- Volunteer: we can organize a volunteer day when ACAN youth and adults can help build their new center ready for the grand opening on Sept. 3

### Rise Together Camp in New Mexico

#### Overview:

- June 13-19
- Total 40 participants including COK and ACAN; 1:1 ratio between COK kids and ACAN youth
- ACAN youth will be 12 or older
- Activities include rock climbing, rappelling, white water rafting, hiking and a service project
- Est. cost per participant is \$600, including transportation. Total cost is \$24,000. We will raise funds for approximately ~\$22,000. ACAN will support up to \$2,500 to this project.

#### Fundraising:

- We will leverage the April 25th Austin Marathon Run for Charity campaign (<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/rise-together21>) to raise funds
- ACAN members pay their own registration fee through the campaign until the total reaches \$10,000 (the rest can be donated to ACAN directly)
- The Moody Foundation will match up to \$10,000
- ACAN members are encouraged to donate beyond their registration fee to cover some costs for the COK kids

#### Registration:

1. Registration opens on April 19th, until May 8th
2. Parents pay registration fee through Run for Charity campaign or directly to ACAN
3. Interviews conducted by ACAN Youth team
4. Final roster released by the end of May

## Appendix:

### Positive feedback from parents:

“Austin talked a lot with DJ, he thinks he is a cool guy. Is it possible to make some arrangement to pair them up and Rise together? Austin is interested in continuing the relationship.”

“昨晚睡前Andy还在说晚上大家一起看星星，拍银河太喜欢这个活动了，继续跟上，Andy参加的620跑步队，每周三次的跑步训练从疫情开始到现在，希望有机会参加4月25日的半马”

“孩子回家用一字概括这次活动：Fulfilling. 非常感谢Ed & Gloria的用心组织，希望次还有机会参与。”

“孩子回家滔滔不绝地讲述这两天的经历，说下回六月份的活动还想参加。”

“孩子们在活动中学习成长获益良多。期待下次的活动。”

### Positive feedback from participants:

“This trip definitely opened my eyes in the way that not everyone is as lucky to have the things that I have that I take for granted. It taught me to be more grateful for what I have and learn to give back to the people who aren't as lucky.”

“I was very surprised about how nice all the adults were, especially the leaders that take care of the underprivileged kids, it was very inspiring to see how the kids treat those people like their own family. It was also amazing to see how they spend so much of their time and love on those kids.”

“After hearing the backgrounds of the adults working there, I felt a little surprised but also kind of sad. I have been fortunate enough to live a pretty comfortable life so far, but this has caused me to shy away from people who have come from different backgrounds other than mine. Going to this camp has helped me realize just how blessed I am, and that I should do better at noticing people suffering around me.”

“But, the highlight of this trip were the kids. I learned their names, chatted, played, explored, and did many, many other activities with them, too. Hearing some of their backgrounds was saddening but still glad in a way that I got to meet them.”