

# Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board NEWSLETTER

# Youth Advisory Board



## Meet the Board Members

### District 1

karen kaur  
Trayzell White

### District 2

Merissa Posh  
Ja'Lyn Wright

### District 3

Savanna Karume  
Audrey Nunez

### District 5

Jordan Kaitapu  
Madison Nguyen

**District 4** is still accepting applications! Must live in, or go to school, in District 4.

Apply here:



Questions? Contact:  
cadyhw@proyouthandfamilies.org



## Hello and Welcome!

Board members, congratulations on your appointment.

The first BHYAB meeting occurred last **Friday, November 6th**, and was quite a success!! Following youth introductions, the board members participated in a personal development assessment, Brown Act training, and began reviewing their bylaws.

The Board members have already offered a suggestion to the original ordinance establishing the board. Their intent is to raise the age threshold to 26 for better inclusivity of transitional aged youth. There is additional interest in expanding the leadership team of the board, allowing for a Vice Chair to accompany the Chair and Secretary.

Counsel has requested all changes made to the original ordinance be established at the same time, as it will require the Board of Supervisors' approval. Tune in to our next meeting to hear more!

A huge thank you to County Counsel, for creating a pre-recorded training of the Brown Act, to accommodate a Friday night youth board meeting.

### Next Board Meeting

Friday, November 19, at 5:30-7:30 pm through zoom.

## Supporter Information



We would like to recognize the advocates of our advocates. Thank you supporters, for being an integral part of the establishment of the BHYAB. A special shout out to those who made the first meeting:

Bina Lefkovitz  
Dave Gordon  
Ann Arniell

For this board to have quorum, meeting availability is mostly Friday evenings or Saturday day.

As we begin to introduce partners and supporters, we will allow supporters the opportunity to pre-record their trainings as well, in case times and dates are not feasible.

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sydneys@proyouthandfamilies.org

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DISFRANCHISEMENT

## karen kaur (she/hers)

Sacramento State University (undergraduate degree) and St Mary's University in London (graduate degree). I work at WEAVE, one of the largest Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault/Sex Trafficking organizations in the nation.

As a first-generation daughter and granddaughter of low-income Punjabi-Sikhs, my elders have constantly reminded me as a child, I was never shy about speaking up against injustices. And as a product of low-income social service programs, I want to continue to improve and change systems that have led to disenfranchised neighborhoods and communities so the most vulnerable children of color can thrive.

"When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else."  
-Toni Morrison.

Who inspires you?  
I can make this list very long but poor and working-class communities of color especially immigrants and the Black community because these are the communities that have raised me.



What makes you feel empowered?

Community, family, love, and Sikhi.



I love building my home library, reading, running, watering my plant babies, and sipping on creamy espresso.

## Trayzell White

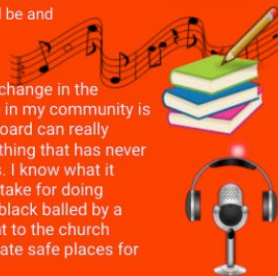
I am not in school now, the schools that I went to for college are Sierra College and Sacramento City College. One achievement I would like everyone to know is I graduated from mental health court. I have been a captain of football teams. I have graduated from high school and I have made it this far. Also, each day I wake up is an achievement because where I could be and where I am are two different places, and I'm thankful for that.

I wanted to be apart of this board because I want to make a change in the community and I feel the like the best way to make a change in my community is acting on others behalf without them asking. I feel like this board can really make a difference and I feel like we are all about to do something that has never been done. I know life gives me a expertise on mental illness. I know what it feels like to be a which in a church and being burned at the stake for doing something I thought was right I know what it feels like to be black balled by a church because I had a mental breakdown at a church. I went to the church because I thought it was the safest place to go. I want to create safe places for those with mental illness to go.

Love liberates it doesn't bind, humor heals hurt, preach I am from the streets this how I regularly speak, and after the storm it shall shine. Love should make you feel like you can do anything not you have to choose out of anything. I believe Love liberates it doesn't bind is a quote by Maya Angelo. Preach I am from the streets this how I regularly speak is a quote by me that you all can find on my instagram. One day someone said to me preach and I thought or told them this how I regularly speak. That quote is important to me because then I felt the power of my words at this time I noticed that people were listening to my words that I was having an impact on other peoples lives. Another one of my favorite quotes is by me and I say Thank God I am his list, not the list.

I would say all the people that have inspired me I do not know. One of the biggest inspirations to me I would have to say is Lebron James. He has made a career while being married with having kids and has no smut on his record. I feel like the money never has changed him I feel like the money just made him able to touch people I feel like the money made it so that he could help people. That's what he has done also I actually had a chance to meet him once and I didn't because of my immaturity. Also one of my inspirations in life is Eric Thomas I say Eric Thomas because his story gives me life his story makes me feel like I can make it as a motivational speaker his story makes me feel like nothing is impossible. That's my dream to be a motivational speaker and have multiple sources of income. I feel like the both of the mare the best in there fields and have multiple sources of income. Another one of my inspirations would have to be Power Rangers because they always help others in there shows regardless of what was in front of them. Power Rangers had a mission and all of them would do there best to complete the mission and to save humanity. I feel like this board can come together and be something like the power rangers for mental health and give the best advice after our time of giving advice is up we all should be making decisions for Sacramento and then the country.

Trauma to power is what makes me feel empowered. Being able to turn my story into power for others is what makes me feel powered. Walking around and holding myself to a certain standard that improves my community. My communities are the LGBT community, those in poverty, those out of poverty; I feel like I can connect with anyone in any type of circumstance. Telling my story and helping people, using my scars as if they were glitter or gold, and more. I feel like that's my super power - empowering others with words, putting them into a trans state that they can do whatever they want and whatever they think. I feel empowered when I realize that I am an advocate for something and I didn't know I was advocating for them. I feel I am empowered when I get a compliment about my size because I have been trying to lose weight and I have been working out. I say that because I am a regular person, I want to convey that I am normal, I just decided to be who I am.



Some of my hobbies include writing music, writing books, spending time with family reading books, watching podcasts, volunteering for the LGBT community center, and more. All of my hobbies release my emotions and feelings it makes me feel better to know that people can become healed through my work also. One of the books that I am writing is called 5 Phrases to Change Someone's Life. I am writing this book because I want connections to again be made in this world - I feel like we are coming to a dead period where we don't know how to truly connect with each other any more with words. I feel like this book can bring people together and shows that trauma can be used as power. I believe I am turning negative energy to positive energy, my trauma can be used for good. I want to start a new culture where those that have been abused can speak out whether the abuse be mental, physical, spiritual, or anything else.

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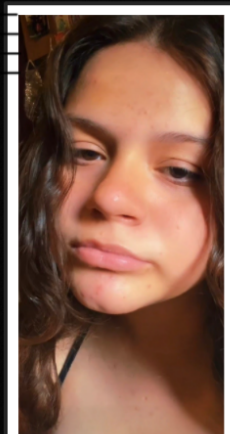
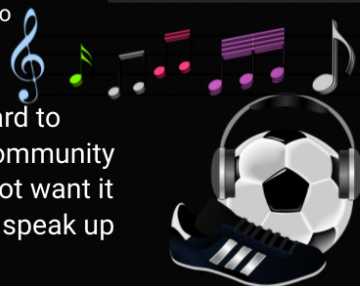
## Merissa Posh

I play soccer. I am also apart of the native youth ambassadors and one of the first members. I also do Aztec dancing. I am also apart of the law academy at my school.

Something that makes me feel empowered is when I know or meet people who have gone through the same things I have or like me.

I like to play soccer, I love to bake. I really like music.

I want to be part of this board to make a difference in this community and help people that may not want it but they get the courage to speak up and confident it at least.



Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.

My grandfather because he grew up in Mexico with nothing and came to America when he was around 21 years old and worked hard for his family.

## Ja'Lyn T. Wright

Sacramento Charter High School (Sac High)

I feel empowered when I'm determined & comfortable, having an objective, having knowledge on the topic and being ready to speak about it makes me feel like I have power to my words.

I want to be a part of this board because it will help me start my journey in making a positive impact on people's mental health.

I like to workout, I like tech, I like dance, and I like backing.

"Above all, don't lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect, he ceases to love."

Who inspires you?

It was a classmate. I admire the guys patience. It could be loud, someone could be screaming and it didn't seem to bother him. To me it was like he had complete control of himself. I want control like that; peace and patience no matter what was happening.



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## Savanna Karmue

I attend Sacramento Country Day School and am currently in 11th grade. In addition, I run an organization called Happy Heart Advices where I work with youth and educate them about their hearts and the importance of living a wholesome lifestyle both mentally and physically. I've been doing my work for over 7 years and I'm so excited to expand more towards Mental Health while on this Board. I also started a podcast, Mental Mondays with Savanna, back in May 2021 to reach out towards youth on a more accessible level. I recently finished my first season and am currently working towards my second season!

I want to be a part of the Sacramento Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board because reaching out to impact youth physically and mentally has been a huge passion of mine. I know that when kids have the right support system and the proper resources both physically AND mentally, they can do anything! I want to be someone who helps make a meaningful impact on their lives while giving back to my community. I believe that being on the Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board for Sacramento will enable me to achieve that goal.

My favorite quote/song lyrics is from O!RUL8,2! by BTS. In the first set, it says: "Nothing lasts forever You only live once So live your life Not any other's lives Take chances and never regret Never be late to do What you wanna do right now Because at one point of someday Everything you did Would be exactly what you will be." This is my favorite lyric because it challenges me to look within myself and inspires me to be the best version I can be. It's also a reminder that I shouldn't take my time for granted, as they advise us to "take chances and never regret". I usually listen to this whenever I need motivation or if something I'm doing is particularly hard and I need to rise above the obstacle.

I feel empowered when I'm able to be myself, speak up for what I believe in, and make a difference in peoples' lives. It encourages me to keep pushing forward and accomplish great things, especially when I motivate someone to do something they believed they couldn't do. This also helps me look within myself and see all the things I'm capable of.



My parents have always and continue to inspire me in my life. From the time I was little, I've always looked up to their hardworking personas and I strive to be like them one day. My mother worked 2 jobs when I was growing up to support my family while my dad does mission work in Liberia. No matter how far they may seem physically, they still continue to shower us in love and nurture my siblings with patience and affection.

I love exercising, especially with my friends, and listening to music. I also enjoy podcasting and collecting albums. On sunny days, walks to the park always bring me joy!



## Audrey Nunez

Graduate from CSU Sacramento, currently a paraprofessional at Gateway Community Collaborative Charter School and as for achievements I think that being the first person to graduate from school in my family while maintaining a spot on the Dean's honor list and positions in several academic clubs are some of my biggest accomplishments.

This board was suggested to me by my current position at the Sac Youth Center as a way to get even more involved within the fight for social justice and beginning the open transparency of discussing mental health for youth.

What makes you feel empowered?

Me? I believe actively being involved with my community and volunteering within non-profits that I feel passionate about. When I am able to actually be a physical part of change and see my own actions help move along the process of youth advocacy, that is when I feel empowered.



I love gardening, reading, tv shows, shopping, getting my nails done, spending time with friends, exploring new restaurants and areas around me.

Who inspires you?

Great Question, My family, my friends, my faith, myself, my teachers, my peers, the list is endlessly as every day I am inspired.

"Look at the stars, look how they shine for you and everything you do..." -Yellow, Coldplay



# Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board NEWSLETTER



# Youth Advisory Board

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## DISTRICT 4



Interested in joining our members, and becoming a youth advisor? Click the link below!



Boards and Commissions  
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Questions? Contact: cadyhw@proyouthandfamilies.org

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## Jordan Kaitapu

- Founder of Black Alumni of Folsom-Cordova Unified •Educational Equity Advocate
- Cordova High Graduate: Class of 2020
- 2019 Youth Leader Award: Courage In Leadership - Nation Building For Youth
- Poet - Poetry Was Displayed In Crocker Art Museum's "Activism Through The Arts" Exhibit

I feel empowered when I'm surrounded by my community.

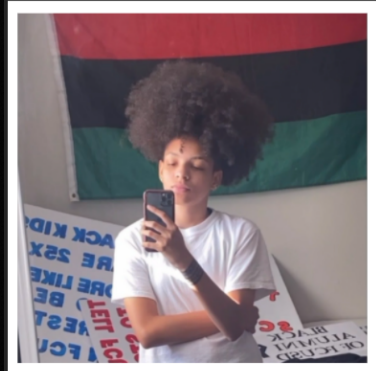
I love to read and write poetry and read books.

I wanted to be a part of this board to advocate for marginalized youth who all deserve to have access to a mental health system that doesn't criminalize them for needing resources or support services.



"Wealth is not the fruit of labor but the result of organized protected robbery." - Frantz Fanon

My peers (other youth) constantly inspire me. Their overall resilience while navigating through institutions that want them to fail while carrying the weight of poor material conditions, mental and physical health issues, and tribulations from school/home motivates me to work to help knock down some of the barriers we all have encountered.



## Madison (Maddie) Nguyen

I go to Franklin High School, apart of the Elk Grove Unified School District, and I am currently a senior. This summer, I had an internship at a non-profit organization called Teachers For Healthy Kids, where I worked heavily on ways to provide mental health resources for students returning back to school for the 2021-2022 school year. At Franklin High, I am a leadership student and work closely with my administration team to put on school events such as Homecoming.

I feel empowered when I am using my mind, words, and actions to advocate for people and help others. Sparking change and impacting my community are things I am extremely passion about and feel most empowered doing. I also feel empowered when I get the chance to spread awareness about topics people are not well informed about and gain support for movements that address important issues.

I love to read, collect crystal, and spend time with my family on my free time, as well as experiment with different makeup looks.

I wanted to be apart of the Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board because I am passionate about mental health advocacy and spreading awareness on the mental health issues people face throughout their lifetimes. In addition, I am eager to help support my fellow students and peers when returning back to campus after a mentally exhausting year of virtual school during Covid-19. I am extremely excited to work with my fellow board members in creating a more acceptable, safe environment where young people feel comfortable seeking help for their mental health issues and bettering their overall well being.



"More matter with less art" - William Shakespeare

My sister has most inspired me in life because of her passion for helping others and intelligence. My sister Jackie has taught me both that kindness is always the answer and that I should not be afraid to stand up for what I believe in. Her ability to balance a busy school schedule as a UC Berkeley student while making time to do the activities she loves and impacting others always amazes me. She has been truly the greatest role model and sister throughout my life, guiding me through my hard times and always finding time to support and be there for me.



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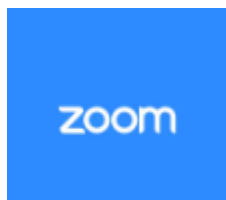
# Youth Advisory Board



## Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board

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## AGENDA



## Video Conferencing, Web Conferencing, Webinars,...

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## MEETING RECORDING



## Boards and Commissions

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## DISTRICT 4 APPLICATION

