



## Improving the Life Chances of Vulnerable Youth

Dear AES Friends and Family,

It is hard to believe how much the world has changed in these last two years. Nothing has become more clearer than the need to continue the work of AES by instilling hope, building community and empowering young people to lead.

To meet this need, Alliance for Education Solutions Inc. is excited to share several changes that are happening within the organization. There are new, but familiar faces joining the AES team, as well as the relaunch of essential in-person events and initiatives. We want to thank you for taking a moment to learn about what's happening in AES and continuing to partner with us as we advocate for vulnerable California young people.



## New Leadership in 2022



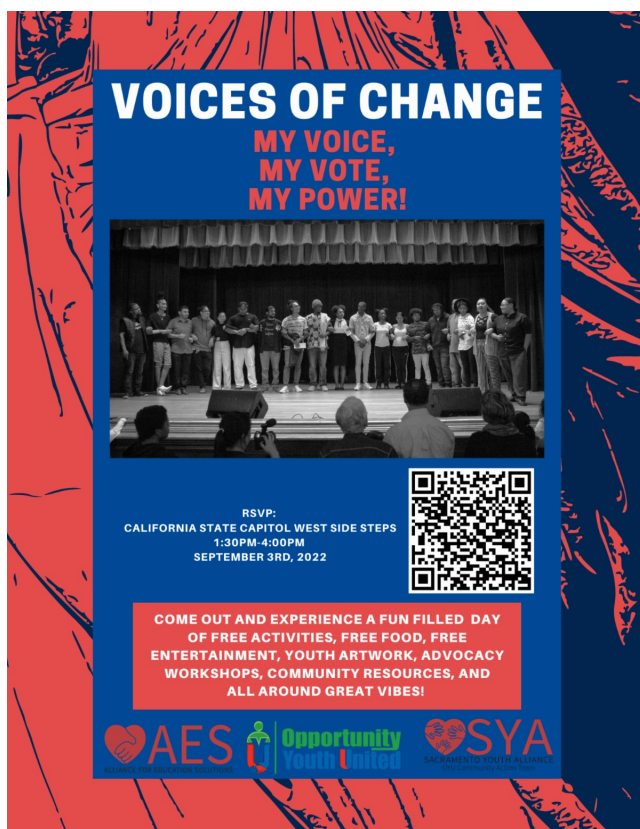
On December 1, 2021, [Jen Halford](#) was officially appointed as the first female Executive Director for Alliance for Education Solutions Inc. Jen is a graduate of California State University, Chico, Santa Clara University School of Law, and is currently working on completing her MBA at Colorado State University. Jen brings with her over a decade of serving on non-profit boards and is truly passionate about helping vulnerable youth thrive. We are thrilled to have her at the helm building the future of AES.

[Ana Taukolo](#) is no stranger to AES, but this is the first time she is back full time as the Director of Youth Programs! She is passionate about youth empowerment and working with communities of color and marginalized groups to create systemic change. Ana specializes in creating programs that focus on youth empowerment and mentorship for

young individuals and we have no doubt she is the right person to take our programs to the next level!

**Katie Peterson** is new to AES, but not to its mission. She spent the last 15 years working in higher education with the majority of her career focused on empowering and equipping students of color from disenfranchised communities to overcome barriers and pursue their dreams. Katie is excited to shift her focus to working behind the scenes and helping AES streamline and increase its capacity for impact as the Director of Operations!

## Join Us for Voices of Change



The 3rd Annual Voices of Change event will be held **September 3rd, 2022** from 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm at The **California State Capitol west side steps**. This year's VOC event series will have a civic engagement focus and provide a safe space for Sacramento youth artists and young activists to speak truth to power.

Highlights include showcasing young artists talented in poetry, singing, rapping, dancing, and spoken word with this year's addition featuring a physical art gallery, community based organizations tabling their resources, and youth interns advocating for the changes they wish to see in the community. For more information about this year's VOC, go to <https://aesimpact.org/voices-of-change-community/>.

## AES Impact Grant: Building Community Together





By the generosity of The Davitto Family Trust, this year AES expanded its portfolio of services to provide four \$15,000 AES Impact Grants to young-serving nonprofits that are doing innovative work in our community. This year's grantees are [The Hawk Institute](#), [Feed Sacramento Homeless](#), [Youth Forward](#), and [Project Optimism](#).

Built upon the idea of Catalytic Philanthropy, in addition to receiving financial support, the grantees also receive support, resources, connections, and community. Grantees will come together quarterly to collaborate and support each other. The hope is that together, we will build community and make a greater impact.



The Hawk Institute hosted the first AES Impact Grant connection on July 26th. Each organization will have the opportunity to host a Connect Event so grantees can share in each others' space and goals. AES Director of Youth Programs Ana and Executive Director Jen led attendees through activities that focus on AES' philosophy of play - connect - learn. As shared by Jen, "It was an amazing day filled with heart and community. I can't wait to see what these organizations do together over the next year to improve the lives of youth!"

## Shawn Mendes Foundation Supports our SYA-CAT

The Sacramento Youth Alliance Community Action Team (SYA-CAT) was invited to attend the Shawn Mendes concert on June 30th to share about the Voices of Change event series and get concert attendees to fill out "pledge to vote" cards. 140

concert goers completed pledge to vote cards and the Shawn Mendes Foundation provided a \$2,500 grant to support Voices of Change. AES Intern Thao Tu shared, "It was a delight and honor being a part of Shawn Mendes WONDER tour. Talking one-on-one with locals from Sacramento while tabling gave me a tiny-glimpse into the life of others and their values—which I noticed reflected mine a lot! Overall, it was a great experience, as I was able to do all the things I love: advocating, dancing, and singing!"



## AES Helps Youth Attend the Kappa League Conference



In June, AES funded \$1,000 to send three young men to attend the annual Kappa League Conference that focuses on entrepreneurship, teamwork, and financial literacy. Students competed in a mock shark tank competition, and one of the scholarship recipients, Andrew Smothers, was on the team that placed 2nd with their presentation of a suite of hair growth products: Hair With a Flair/Dope Dreds/Black Magic. All participants raved about the experience and were full of gratitude to AES for helping make their

attendance possible.

## Support the Children's Fund - VOTE Yes on Measure L

After several years of lobbying, the Sacramento City Council has finally approved putting the children's fund measure on the 2022 ballot! At the July City Council meeting, AES' Director of Youth Programs, Ana, co-presented in support of the measure and successfully articulated the need for this measure to move forward.

[Watch this video to learn why Measure L is needed.](#)



As part of the Sac Kids First Coalition, AES has been advocating with 36 nonprofits and advocacy groups for the placement of the children's fund measure on the ballot for the past four years. Funding will be provided from the tax on the sale of cannabis. Good Day recently highlighted the coalition's success in advocating for the measure to be added onto the ballot. But our work is just getting started. Join us in supporting Measure L on the



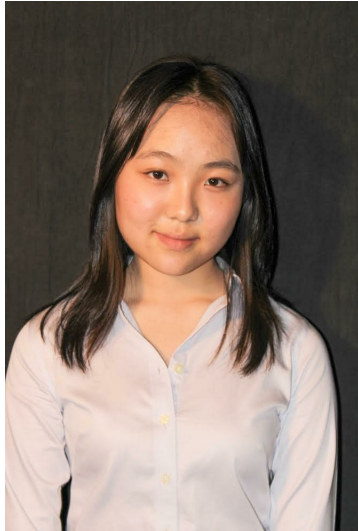
November ballot. Learn more [here on the Sac Kids First website](#) and help us mobilize voters! Our Sacramento youth need your support!

## VOC Intern Spotlight: Grace Hadani

Grace Hadani is an incoming Junior at Davis Senior High School and is very excited to channel her passion into a project for Voices for Change events. She loves to swim with her club team, and her high school team. She loves hanging with her friends and enjoying boba!



## VOC Intern Spotlight: Lavin Ma



Lavin Ma is a senior attending Vista del Lago High School in Folsom. As the Alliance for Education Solutions (AES) Voices for Change (VOC) Youth Ambassador, she serves to advocate for the voices of youth in Sacramento. She enjoys helping the community through volunteering and leadership programs. She strives to create more opportunities for everyone to succeed regardless of one's ethnic background, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental state, and physical ability.

She is passionate about advocating for youth voices and helping and improving the community on various policy issues, ranging from diversity, mental health, education, sustainability, and social justice. With her experience from volunteering and leadership programs, she has developed skills in communication, collaboration, and leadership. She aims to be a part of the development of policies in our community and input the youth voice into it.

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