Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Youth Advisory Counci ADVISORY

Cohort 6 2024-2025

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

YOUTH

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES **Public Health**

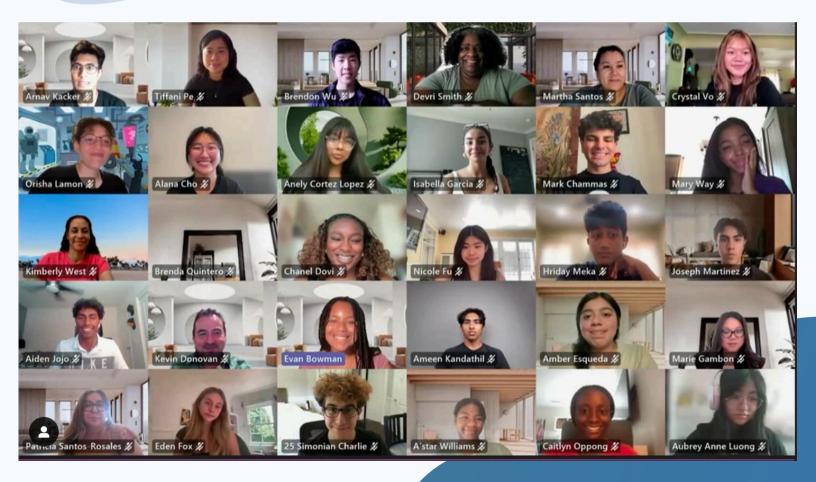


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Our Mission

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Youth Advisory Council is a group of youth brought together to increase youth involvement. The Council is part of the Department's Positive Youth Development Initiative that aims to promote positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities that build on strengths and empower nextgeneration change-makers to reach their full potential.

Service Planning Areas

Los Angeles County is divided into eight "Service Planning Areas" (SPAs) for health care planning purposes. Each SPA has an Area Health Office that is responsible for planning public health and clinical services according to the health needs of local communities. Every member of the Youth Advisory Council represents a different SPA. Check out the map below to see the different SPA locations.



Positive Youth Development

Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and their peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship

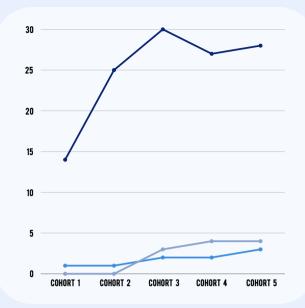
Connection:

Confidence: An internal sense of overall positive selfworth and self efficacy

Thriving Youth Contribution: Contributions to self, family, community, and to the institutions of a civil society Competence: A positive view of one's actions in specific areas, including social and academic skills

Caring: A sense of sympathy and empathy for others Character: Respect for societal and cultural norms, possessions of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (Morality), and Integrity)

Statistics



- A 93% increase in yac membership To date since cohort 1.
- An Increase in mentorship tiers from 1 to 3
- An increase in the number of subcommittees from 0 to 4.





Our recent engagement analysis reflects strong growth and expanded reach. A significant portion of our audience consists of new viewers, demonstrating the effectiveness of our outreach efforts. Increased profile views and a rise in followers indicate heightened interest and a deepening connection with our content. These trends highlight the platform's ability to attract and engage a broader community.

Subcommittees

The Information Subcommittee is tasked with the responsibility of systematically analyzing and disseminating pertinent updates in public health across local, state, national, and global domains. Its primary objectives are to enlighten and educate the council, maintain current awareness of prevailing health issues, engage with significant figures in public health, and collate valuable advice and resources for presentation to the council. Informational sources utilized by the subcommittee encompass a range of references, including but not limited to scholarly papers, news articles, and interviews with subject matter specialists.





The Newsletter Subcommittee is responsible for publishing the Youth Advisory Council's monthly newsletter. These newsletters keep members up to date on important announcements, events, and public health news, highlight the work of youth advisors, and entertain readers with fun articles on relevant topics like well-being practices, reading recommendations, delicious recipes, and more!

Subcommittees

The Alumni Network aims to reconnect the graduated Council members with each other, the current Youth Advisors, and the county. Many of our alumni have gone on to lead successful careers beyond the Youth Advisory Council and their guidance can be extremely beneficial to the current Youth Advisors. Having been in the same position as the current Youth Advisors, the alumni are able to relate on a more personal level with them compared to most other speakers the council hosts. Through workshops, personal communication, and opportunity sharing, the alumni of the YAC continue to make their impact on their communities after graduating from the program.





The Social Media Subcommittee is dedicated to amplifying the voices of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) on Instagram. Committed to fostering creativity and authentic representation, this subcommittee empowers YAC members to share and curate content that resonates with their vision and perspectives. By providing a platform for innovative expression, the subcommittee ensures that the YAC's unique insights and contributions are prominently featured and celebrated across social media channels, fostering engagement and connection with a broader audience.

Monthly Meetings

Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, the shift from in-person to online meetings has marked a transformative moment for the Youth Advisory Council. The growing focus on public health during this time not only heightened awareness but also galvanized youth participation. The online format allowed for greater accessibility, ensuring that young people

from across the entire county could engage equally, regardless of geographical or logistical barriers. This virtual model fostered a strong sense of community while addressing concerns about virus transmission and transportation. The Council Coordinators and Senior Youth Advisors have been instrumental in creating an inclusive, dynamic environment, ensuring that discussions are relevant, impactful, and inspiring. As inperson gatherings become more frequent, the Council has seamlessly integrated a hybrid approach, allowing for continued participation and collaboration in both virtual and physical spaces.



Monthly Meetings



October In Person Meeting Cohort 6



Christmas Meeting Cohort 6

Youth Advisors

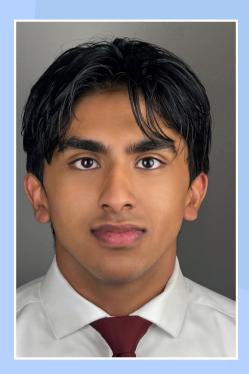
A Youth Advisor is a person aged 16 to 21 years old who offers guidance to the Los Angeles Department of Public Health and possesses less than one year of experience within the council. Additionally, Youth Advisors undertake a passion project aimed at benefiting and educating their communities, integrating their personal interests with public health concerns. Ada Qari (she/her) is a first-year college student majoring in Public Health at Pasadena City College. She is passionate about pursuing a career in healthcare, with a focus on improving access to quality care in underserved communities. Currently, she serves as a first-year youth advisor and is an active member of the social media subcommittee. Prior to this role. Ada participated in the Public Health Youth Leader Program for two years. Outside of academics, Ada is deeply involved in her community. She volunteers at her local mosque and with ICNA Relief's hunger prevention program, distributing food to families in need. She is also a Youth Ambassador for the Garfield Health Center, where she volunteers at clinics. She also volunteers as a translator to help refugees overcome language barriers and access essential services. Additionally, Ada contributes her time to organizations such as the Red Cross and Amgen Biotech. In high school, Ada was an avid soccer player and a member of the track and field team, highlighting her love for athletics. As a first-generation immigrant from Afghanistan, she values education and community involvement, especially given the challenges women face in her home country regarding access to education and advocacy opportunities.





Aiden Jojo (he/him) is a junior and first-generation student at West Ranch High School, where dual enrollment courses in economics and public health sparked his passion for both fields. His drive for business leadership shines through his role as a Sectional Officer in the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), where he oversees 22 high schools and founded his school's chapter, growing it to over 70 members. His interest in advocacy developed through his internship with a state senate campaign, and as a youth advisory member for the LA County Department of Public Health representing Service Planning Area 2, he is particularly passionate about addressing the fentanyl crisis and substance abuse prevention. Aiden also champions educational equity as Vice President of Math Star Education, teaching advanced mathematics to middle school students from underserved backgrounds. With aspirations to study public health and economics in college, he hopes to develop innovative solutions for healthcare accessibility and promote drug prevention initiatives. When he's not working on community projects, Aiden enjoys playing volleyball for his high school team and exploring new music to add to his ever-growing playlist.

Ameen Kandathil (he/him/his) is a senior at Bravo Medical Magnet with a passion for healthcare, public policy, and economics. He works in Dr. Thomas's lab at the USC Health Sciences Campus, contributing to groundbreaking research on vision restoration therapies. Ameen serves as the president of his YMCA Youth and Government delegation and is a council member for the LAUSD Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. He leads impactful community health initiatives, including a community garden project that teaches students to grow their own food, with the harvest donated to local shelters, and a weekly PB&J drive that has provided over 4,000 sandwiches to those in need. Ameen plans to pursue economics and public health in college. Outside of academics, he enjoys playing soccer, tennis, and basketball. A fun fact about Ameen is that his photography work has been featured in campaigns for Ulta Beauty and a few magazines.





Anne Luong (she/her/hers) is a senior at the Applied Technology Center and hopes to attend a 4-year university after she graduates. She currently serves as a Youth Advisor at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and through her work, hopes to aid in normalizing mental health throughout the community. And while she is still undecided about her career, she hopes to pursue neuroscience or psychology to continue making the world a better place! Brendon Wu (he/him/his) is a junior at Alhambra High School, passionate about the intersection of healthcare and computer science. He leads his school's STEM Olympiad and Computer Science Clubs, and currently performs machine learning research under UCSF's Bakar Computational Health Sciences Institute. Born and raised in a first-generation family, Brendon is deeply committed to understanding and addressing the challenges faced by immigrant communities when traversing the medical system. Through serving on the Youth Advisory Council, he looks forward to amplifying youth perspectives in public health and exploring digital strategies for outreach, education, and advocacy. In his free time, you can find him hooping on the court or experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen.





Caitlyn Oppong (she/her/hers) is a senior at Marlborough School, committed to excellence in the classroom and in extracurricular endeavors. As a first-year on the 2024-2025 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Youth Advisory Council, Caitlyn is excited to represent Service Planning Area 8 and learn how to become a advocate for infant and maternal mortality prevention resources in her community. During her free time, Caitlyn enjoys singing, traveling, baking, and reading. Some of Caitlyn's hobbies also include playing Golf for over 10 years, singing in Marlborough School's Chamber Choir. She plans to further her education, majoring in either Public Health or Biology at a 4-year college. In the future, Caitlyn intends to become an OB/GYN and develop medical equipment and products that will improve and support women's healthcare.

Chanel Dovi (She/her/hers) is a junior Public Health major, French minor at UCLA. At UCLA, she is involved in Afrikan Education Project - a community service organization that volunteers at elementary schools in LAUSD, Children of the **Diaspora - an organization focused on bringing the Black Bruins** together through community service and social events, and UCLA's Vice Provost Initiative - a college access program for black students in LAUSD. She is interested in obtaining a Master's in Public Health and examining how health policy dictates our health in the United States and across the globe. In her free time, Chanel enjoys journaling, collaging, and rewatching all her favorite shows. Chanel is a first year Youth Advisor passionate about examining maternal mortality in Los Angeles County, more specifically SPA 6. Additionally, she would like to use her time in YAC to understand the role of Public Health in public school systems across the county. Through her position in YAC, she hopes to further engage the youth community in Public Health initiatives and encourage them to speak up about what aspects of Public Health are important to them.



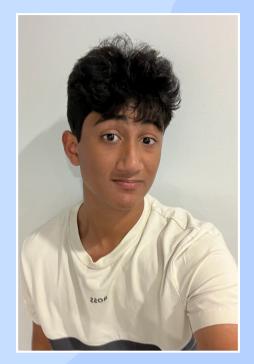


Charles Simonian is a high school senior who attends Flintridge Preparatory School in Los Angeles, California. He works as a member of the Youth Advisory Council for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Charles is especially passionate about addressing the opioid epidemic through education, research, and intervention. He has written a literature review regarding the socioeconomic implications of the opioid crisis and has implemented Narcan vending container programs across Los Angeles. In addition to helping guide the efforts of the DPH, Charles expands his Narcan distribution project as a Youth Advisor, focusing on providing Narcan to school districts. He also deeply enjoys traveling to Tejutla, Guatemala each summer, where he conducts mental health research. Crystal Vo (She/her/hers) is a senior at Marco Antonio Firebaugh High School and a passionate advocate for community service, STEM education, and healthcare equity. She is the founder and president of Project Impact, a youthled organization dedicated to creating positive change through local initiatives, and serves as a Youth Advisory **Council member for the Los Angeles Department of Public** Health. Crystal is also a Gold Award Girl Scout who focuses on creating sustainable projects that address community needs and inspire future leaders. She plans to pursue a nursing degree and is particularly interested in working with under-resourced communities. A fun fact about Crystal is that she recently traveled to South Korea in the Spring of 2024 on a full scholarship as a cultural ambassador, which deepened her appreciation for global perspectives and diversity.





Eden Fox (she/her/hers) is a senior at Marlborough School and a youth advisor on the LA County Department of Public Health Youth Advisory Council. She collaborates with other young leaders to address reproductive injustice and enhance awareness of targeted health issues affecting adolescents. Eden conducts landscape analysis reports of her Service Planning Area (SPA 5), which encompasses West LA, to help guide public health efforts and her independent project involving community lectures. Through her role, she aims to promote equitable maternal healthcare and expand reproductive education among youth. Eden plans to enter college as a pre-medical student with a Public Health major, aspiring to become a cardiothoracic surgeon. In her downtime, she enjoys driving along the Pacific Coast Highway, listening to everything from classic rock to rap.



Hriday Meka (he/him/his) is a senior at North Hollywood High School. He is interested in fields like biology, political science, and economics, and hopes to work in biotechnology in the future. His interest in public health was sparked after the Aliso Canyon gas leak in 2015, where he witnessed the impact that public health officials can have on a community. With the opportunity afforded by the Youth Advisory Council, he aspires to speak on and raise awareness about topics like nutrition and sustainability. Outside of the council, Hriday deeply enjoys tutoring, having worked at Mathnasium and Kumon. In his free time, you can find him playing sports (such as basketball or tennis) and watching old movies!

Mary Way (she/her) is a second year at Cal State Long Beach as an Information System Major and she works as a Youth Counselor at the L.A. County Department of Public Health. Through working at DPH, she hopes to spread awareness about mental health, build up her community, and spread awareness about safety online. Mary wants to dive deeper into information systems and explore internships to gain hands-on experience in the field before starting her professional career.



Nicole Fu (she/her) is a senior at Troy High school in the Troy Tech Business Pathway program. She works as a First-Year Youth Advisor at the L.A. County Department of Public Health. Through her work at DPH, she hopes to become a young entrepreneur dedicated to prioritizing health equity and services and play a role in making a positive impact in society. Nicole is passionate about studying the intersection between business and public health, and hope to pursue the two interdisciplinary studies in college. Outside of academics, she is involved in competitive Hip-Hop dance and a founder of her career club organization.





Tiffani Pe (she/her) is a second-year undergraduate student pursuing a double major in Political Science and Public Affairs at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is proud to represent the Antelope Valley/SPA 1 in her first year working with the Youth Advisory Council. Her motivation for committing to YAC is driven by her involvement in leading the Youth-Led Quartz Hill Food Pantry. Tiffani's time spent as **Co-Director of Operations and Youth Mentor gave her** experience in organizing food distributions serving nearly 300 community members each month, which showed her the growing need in her community. Volunteering with a team of diverse youth volunteers from local schools taught her that dedication to change must start young. As a UCLA student, Tiffani finds special interest in researching the impact of urban planning on systemic oppression and its subsequent effects on widening food disparities, declining mental health, and rising substance addiction. Post-grad, Tiffani plans to develop equitable policies and programs in California's local government (state, county, or city) with a focus on representing underrepresented areas and demographics, such as her home region, the Antelope Valley/SPA 1.

Senior Youth Advisors

A Senior Youth Advisor is an individual aged 16 to 21 years who provides advisory services to the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, demonstrating more than one year of experience within the council. In addition to advising, they play a supportive role in the planning and facilitation of monthly meetings. Moreover, Senior Youth Advisors take on a mentoring role, bridging the gap between Youth Advisors and SPA (Service Planning Area) supervisors/staff, fostering a cohesive and collaborative environment within the council.



Amber Esqueda (she/her/hers)

Amber Esqueda is a recent graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles who majored in Human Biology and Society and minored in Spanish. Her interest in the field of public health and passion for serving underprivileged communities inspired her to become a part of the Youth Advisory Council back in 2023. Amber is currently working as a Genetic Counseling Assistant and, in the future, plans on applying to graduate school to earn her Master's degree in Genetic Counseling. Before graduating from UCLA, Amber was involved with Advocating for Intersectional Medicine, Teens for Screens, American Medical Women's Association, CampMed, Caraway, and the REACH Lab at UCLA. In her free time, Amber enjoys reading, thrifting, and trying out new coffee shops. Within YAC, she hopes to continue to raise awareness about important issues impacting her community, educate others on the importance of accessibility, and learn more about the overall field of public health.

Isabella García (She/her/hers)

Isabella García (she/her) is a senior at Glendora High school. She is currently in her second year with the YAC, working in the mentor role as a Senior Youth Advisor for the L.A. County Department of Public Health. Working in the DPH, she hopes to better educate herself and others on mental health stigma, as well as ways to reduce this stigma and other health inequities like access to period products. In her first year with the Council, Isabella coordinated a period product drive, creating over 150 period care packages for members of her community.





Anely Cortez Lopez (she/her) is a first-generation senior at Gardena High School, passionately dedicated to advocating for educational and health equity in historically marginalized communities. She serves as the Student Board Member for the Los Angeles Unified School District, representing over half a million students and championing initiatives that promote equity and opportunity. Anely has collaborated with the Office of LA County Supervisor for the 2nd District and received a county commendation for organizing a transformative resource fair in South Los Angeles. Recognized as Linked Learning's Student of the Year, she is also the Founder of her school's National Honor Society and serves as President of both the Key Club and Medical Services Academy Student Council. She aspires to attend a four-year university and continue championing meaningful change in Los Angeles and her ancestral communities in Mexico.

Omar Garcia (he/him) is a second-year Computer Science student at El Camino College. 2024 marks Omar's second year with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, where he serves as a Senior Youth Advisor on the Youth Advisory Council. Omar's passion for public health stems from his battle with cancer at the age of 19. This experience gave him valuable insight into the healthcare system and the incredible individuals who keep it running. His deep appreciation for those who supported him during his journey inspired him to commit to making a positive impact on his community. His favorite part of serving on the Youth Advisory Council is participating in outreach activities, such as the monthly Produce Distribution within his SPA. Omar has visited four states near California but hopes to continue traveling and experiencing new places in the future.





Lakshmi Jimenez (she/her/hers) is a first-year student at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), majoring in Psychobiology where she is a member of UCLA Medlife club passionate about pursuing a career in healthcare. Growing up as a first-generation Mexican American, Lakshmi faced numerous challenges that fueled her ambition to be a change in her community. Throughout her academic journey, Lakshmi has been recognized for her resilience, leadership, and hard work being the recipient of the KPMG Future Leaders Scholarship, the Open Bank Scholarship, and the Los Angeles County Commission Resilience Scholarship. She is deeply grateful for these opportunities, which have played a great role in her pursuit of higher education. Beyond her studies, Lakshmi is committed to giving back to others. She has spent her summers volunteering with various organizations, most recently volunteering as a Crisis Counselor and traveling to Thailand, where she worked with children, helped build schools, and immersed herself in the country's rich culture. In her leisure time, Lakshmi enjoys rewatching her favorite shows on Netflix, playing the flute, reading, and hiking. Lakshmi attributes much of her achievements to the strong support system she has in her life. She is immensely thankful for the guidance and encouragement from everyone in her life including family, mentors, and most importantly, God. Lakshmi is honored to serve as a Senior Youth Advisor for the Council, and looks forward to continuing her work with like-minded peers.

Andrea Alvarez (She/her/hers) is a senior at the Applied Technology Center High School in the Health Sciences Pathway. She loves playing video games, piano, and watching anime! Andrea has been passionate about psychology since she was young, and hopes to pursue the field of Psychiatry in the future. Andrea is currently employed at the L.A. County Department of Public Health Youth Advisory Council, where she works to make her community a happy, safe, and welcoming environment for all. Fun fact: Andrea has two cats named Jupiter and Saturn that make it their personal goal to destroy her room every day!





Joseph Martinez (he/him) is a first-year Global Health major at UCSD. He works as a Senior Youth Advisor at the L.A. County Department of Public Health, helping plan out monthly meetings and aiding in whatever way he can. Through his work thus far in DPH, he helped raise awareness on the issues of substance abuse among young adolescents in his senior year of highschool through conducting his passion project. Joseph is looking to shape out a career in the medical field and aim to leave a positive effect on any community he's apart of. Lastly, he is also a huge nerd and enjoys Star Wars, sports, anime, music, movies, and overall tries to bring a little bit of laughter anywhere.

Council Coordinators

Council Coordinator is an individual aged 16 to 21 years who offers advisory services to the Los Angeles Department of Public Health, demonstrating more than two years of experience within the council. Their responsibilities encompass the strategic planning and facilitation of both monthly meetings and subcommittees. In addition to these duties, Council Coordinators assume a mentoring role for both Youth Advisors (YAs) and Senior Youth Advisors (SYAs), contributing to their professional development. They further play a pivotal administrative role and maintain close collaboration with the staff team.



Alana Cho (She/her/hers)

Alana is a sophomore at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), majoring in Human Biology and Society. She is passionate about financial literacy, BioDesign, and pediatric care, actively pursuing these interests through various roles. As a second-year Council Coordinator, Alana founded and now leads the Information Subcommittee. She also serves as a Research and Assessment Peer Coach for UCLA Financial Wellness, helping fellow students achieve financial independence. This summer, she interned at several MedTech startups, where she contributed to market research, prototyping, and business development. Alana has been shadowing in the emergency department at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and will soon begin conducting clinical research there. Fun fact: she is a certified scuba diver with a love for underwater exploration.

A'star Williams (She/her/hers)

A 'star Williams is a 19-year-old junior social work major at California State University Long Beach. She is the Class representative for the President Scholars 2023 Cohort and is involved in a Christian club at her school called Intervarsity. A'star works as a Council Coordinator at the L.A. County Department of Public Health, is responsible for helping with planning meetings, and is the head of the Youth Advisory Council Newsletter Subcommittee In the future, she plans to work with kids as a social worker. This was inspired by her passion to help vulnerable children. Besides that, she is a dedicated student, who prides herself on keeping her grades up and having a good relationship with her teachers. A 'star will go to Disney for the first time in 2025.





Arnav Kacker (he/him/his) is a fourth-year Biology major at the University of California, Riverside. This is his second year as a Council Coordinator for the LADPH Youth Advisory Council, and his fourth year on the council. Arnav's goal in the council this year is to collect and publish tangible data that demonstrates the benefits that youth councils have on youth professional development. Outside of the youth advisory council, Arnav aspires to become a physician and utilize his public health knowledge in practicing preventative medicine and address the social disparities of patients. A fun fact about Arnav is that he has been practicing martial arts since he was in elementary school!

Evan Bowman (She/her/hers)

Evan Bowman (she/her) is a third-year History of Medicine and Science and Public Health major at Yale University. She works as a Council Coordinator at the L.A. County Department of Public Health, co-leading meeting facilitation and coordinating council operations. Through her work at DPH, she hopes to help increase well-being and health equity in her community. Evan is a pre-medical student working on her campus to promote the intersection of Medicine and the Humanities through her recently founded organization, Humanities in Medicine Celebrations. She is also a member of and social action chair of her chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, an executive board member of the Black Solidarity Conference at Yale, and a study abroad student outreach coordinator. As the LACDPH Community Public Health Team YAC-liaison, Evan assisting with the administration and promotion of community-based public health work.





Orisha Lamon (they/them/she/hers) Orisha Lamon (they/she), is an undergraduate student of Geography/Environmental Studies and minoring in Public Health and African American Studies at UCLA. They work as a Council Coordinator for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, as a part of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC). As a member of YAC Orisha plans to help with the coordination of monthly meetings alongside providing any peer support for fellow youth advisors on their passion projects and research. Orisha is passionate about studying Black and critical geographies, public health, and ethnomusicology alongside working within community spheres of Black maternal wellness.

Rocio Escamilla (she/her/hers) is a first-generation Mexican American and a freshman at UCLA studying Psychobiology. As a passionate advocate for healthcare and community well-being, Rocio is actively involved with UCLA Relay for Life, supporting the American Cancer Society's efforts to fund cancer research and provide services for those affected by the disease. Previously, Rocio founded and served as president of her high school's pre-med club, Gen-Z in Medicine, which aimed to inspire students to pursue careers in healthcare and address the lack of diversity in the field. She has also been a Youth Advisor for the Department of Public Health, where she advocated for youth mental health, eating disorder care, and community-based health initiatives. Now she is serving as a council coordinator and enjoys giving guidance and support in planning monthly meetings. Rocio is currently considering a career as a dietitian and plans to pursue a master's degree in the field. She is also interested in completing a Food Studies minor to complement her studies and explore the connections between nutrition, public health, and culture. Ultimately, she hopes to work in underserved communities, advocating for greater access to nutritious food and healthcare resources.



Thank you to our partners for their support

Dr. Batra, Deputy Director, LACDPH Dr. Franklin, MCAH Director, LACDPH Environmental Justice and Climate Health Office of Violence Prevention Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Program AIMM Planned Parenthood LA LA County Youth Commission Department of Youth Development Substance Abuse and Prevention Control Program Asthma Coalition LA County Department of Mental Health Los Angeles LGBT Center Office of Cannabis Management Office of Planning, Integration, and Engagement

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