



September E-Newsletter

From Scholarships to Service: Growing Leadership Through AASuccess



Dear AASuccess family, friends, colleagues, and supporters,

This month, we celebrate milestones that reflect the true spirit of AASuccess—empowering young people to grow as leaders while making a difference in their communities. From the inaugural Ebenstein Scholarship winners and student-led Education Camp to alumni returning as mentors, our community continues to grow in service and leadership. Thank you for supporting this cycle of impact.

Eden Center Announces AASuccess Scholarship Winners from the Vietnamese-American Community



Falls Church, Virginia – [Eden Center](#) is thrilled to announce the inaugural winners of the Ebenstein Scholarship, exclusively designed for Vietnamese-American high school students who demonstrate a strong commitment to servant leadership and community growth. This prestigious award honors the legacy of [Douglas](#) and [Norman Ebenstein](#), whose philanthropic efforts have greatly impacted local communities and advanced educational initiatives.

Each scholar will share a total of \$10,000 in scholarship funds to further their education and continue their commendable work in leadership and community service. These scholarship recipients were selected based on their proven track record of servant leadership and their active participation in AASuccess' life skills and leadership programs.

Program Overview:

The Ebenstein Scholarship is a two-phase program that encourages young leaders to mentor other students and create and manage impactful community projects, such as BizHarmony and the Annual AASuccess Benefit Gala. In addition to financial support, the program offers educational and career development opportunities through internships and mentoring, ensuring that scholars have access to the resources they need to succeed.

2025 Ebenstein Scholarship Recipients: Kingston Ho and Kaila Le



A rising freshman at Virginia Tech majoring in economics, **Kingston Ho** has been a part of AASuccess for five years. In the past, Kingston has contributed to a variety of projects, including AASuccess's annual scholarship program, a pickleball fundraiser, and support for past Galas. As an Ebenstein Scholarship, he worked closely with mentors and the operation team to lead BizHarmony, a student-led networking event he created to connect students with professionals and businesses through workshops such as resume reviews, elevator pitch practice, and professional headshots. The experience was transformative, allowing him to grow as both a leader and a person while overcoming challenges like scheduling conflicts and tight deadlines, ultimately bringing the AASuccess community together to foster meaningful connections. His contribution during this period earned him a total of \$4,000, reflecting his dedication to create impactful initiatives.



Kaila Le is now a rising freshman at Virginia Commonwealth University pursuing her passion in Marketing. Kaila joined AASuccess 5 years ago and is one of this year's Ebenstein scholars. As head of marketing, she has had the opportunity to work on nearly all of the student projects. One of the most significant projects she took on during this scholarship was organizing the AAS Yard Sale fundraiser. She led the item collection, coordinated logistics, and designed advertising to get the word out. Her efforts in this event brought in a total of \$700. In addition to organizing the fundraiser, a big part of her scholarship experience involved supporting AASuccess marketing efforts. Responsibilities include managing digital content, shaping the organization's online presence, creating social media content, website management, and handling video projects such as Shark Tank Success, spanning from filming to editing. Additionally, during the time spent preparing for the Gala, Kaila took the lead on several marketing materials, including working on the "Save the Date" flier, designing the event program booklet and the presentation, and creating the decorations. Throughout this journey, Kaila has learned the importance of delegating tasks effectively, trusting her team, and empowering others to take ownership of their contributions. She discovered the value of clear and concise communication, identifying problems early, responding quickly, and maintaining strong connections with everyone involved. In addition, Kaila refined her marketing skills by exploring new techniques and perspectives, which strengthened her confidence and effectiveness as both a communicator and collaborator.

Press Release Written by Angela Le

AASuccess Operations Team - Student Project & Scholarship Head



Education Camp– Hillary Nguyen and Mason Le

In addition to supporting the Ebenstein Scholars, the Ebenstein Scholarship is proud to sponsor an AASuccess community project: the Education Camp, led by students Hillary Nguyen and Mason Le.

Hillary and Mason's project addressed the educational disparities faced by underprivileged 4th and 5th graders in NoVA. In response to the long-term academic setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, their project bridges educational gaps by strengthening core skills in Math and English.

Before developing the curriculum, Hillary and Mason consulted with local teachers to identify the most effective approaches for 4th and 5th graders. They also incorporated a variety of teaching tools, including instructional modules from the William & Mary School of Education, examples from FCPS Distance Learning, and math practice materials from the Virginia Department of Education and K5 Learning.

The project culminated in a three-day Education Camp for 4th and 5th graders, held on April 24, May 3, and May 4, 2025, in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington. The camp served 6 to 7 students and focused on strengthening skills in Math and English.



Reflecting on the experience, **Mason Le** shared:

"Hello! My name is Mason Le and I am a 9th grader at Thomas Jefferson High School. My partner in the Education Camp was Hilliary Nguyen, a 10th grader at James Madison. The Education Camp, a project from September 2024, involved lots of planning and was often tedious. Since it was our first project, we struggled with productivity at first and faced many last-minute date changes due to conflicting schedules. On the first day, we felt anxious about how the hour would go and how we would teach the kids, but perseverance helped everything run smoothly. Co-leading this project gave us valuable practice in planning real-life events, talking on calls with adults, and emailing. In the end, the hardships we faced were worth it."

Final Note:

Eden Center is proud to support the next generation of leaders within the Vietnamese-American community and is committed to continuing the Ebenstein family's legacy of philanthropy and community support. The AASuccess Scholarship program is designed to ensure that each scholar can maximize their leadership potential and contribute positively to society. For more information about the scholarship and the application process, please visit [AASuccess](#).



How Crochet Heals the Mind

Crochet may appear to be a simple hobby, but for many it is a powerful form of self-care and connection. Beyond creating scarves or blankets, crochet offers a way to calm the mind, ease anxiety, and build confidence through the steady rhythm of each stitch. It fosters focus, reduces stress, and brings people together in supportive communities. This reflection by student Hannah Nguyen shows how something as simple as yarn and a hook can become a path to healing, creativity, and belonging.

I believe that crochet is more than just a craft. It is an activity that helps people calm their minds, release stress, and manage anxiety in healthy ways. Some people might think that crochet is only about creating scarves, blankets, or decorations, but it is also about mental health. Crochet is like a distraction for your hands and mind, and can be used as a powerful tool for anyone who feels overwhelmed or worried.

When people feel anxious, they usually think a lot without allowing their brain to rest. Crochet helps fix this by giving the hands and brain something steady to focus on. Each stitch goes one after another, creating a pattern that is both simple and comforting. Instead of stressing about the future or worrying about the past, a person can focus on the thread slipping through their fingers and the gentle movement of the hook. According to researcher Sebastiano et al (2025), even a single crochet session improved people's attention and helped them reach a "flow state", which is when the brain becomes calm but fully focused. I believe that when people crochet they find peace in this rhythm of calm focus.

Crochet also helps people to relax and reduce stress. A 2024 study by Hasan showed that high school students in a crochet club felt more relaxed, spent less time scrolling on social media, and gained a sense of accomplishment after sessions. This proved that crochet is not only healthier than endless scrolling but also gives people pride in what they make.

Another reason I believe crochet helps with stress is that it improves mood. A global survey of over 8,000 crocheters found that most people felt happier and calmer after they crocheted (Burns et al. 2021). If someone is struggling with anxiety, this simple activity can lift their spirits. Finishing even a small project shows them that they are capable of creating something meaningful, which builds confidence.



Crochet also brings people together. Crochet clubs are safe groups that create space for laughter, support, and belonging. Research by Burns et al. also proves that crafts like crochet build identity, connection, and purpose. When people crochet with friends or family, they are not only helping themselves feel calmer but also forming bonds. Many groups even work on collective goals, like creating blankets to donate to hospitals or shelters. This shows that crochet is not just about helping ourselves. It's about making a positive impact in the community.

What's most powerful about crochet is how simple it is to start. All that's needed is yarn, a hook, and a basic stitch. Dedicating just 30-45 minutes, two or three times a week, has been shown to reduce stress and improve attention. Students can also keep a short journal before and after sessions to see how their mood and focus improve over time.

I believe crochet is not just art, but healing. It lowers anxiety, improves mood, and builds community. It allows young people an escape from daily stress, teaches patience, and provides a safe and creative space. Crochet is truly more than a craft, it provides a path to peace, connection, and confidence. This is why I believe crochet is a way for people to take care of their minds and hearts.

Hannah Nguyen

9th Grade, Falls Church High School, AASuccess Student

Cited Sources:

1. **Crochet & attention (MEG study)** - Sebastiano et al. (2025). *Crochet increases attention through a requiring motor skill learning*. Scientific Reports, 15(1), 4141. [PubMed](#)
2. **Hasan, S. (2024)**. *The Relation Between Crocheting, Social Media, and Social Isolation*. [Journal of Student Research+1](#)
3. **Burns et al. (2021)**. *Happy Hookers: Findings from an international study exploring the effects of crochet on wellbeing*. Perspectives in Public Health, 141(3), 149–157. [PubMed](#)



AASuccess Alum Comes Full Circle in Mentorship

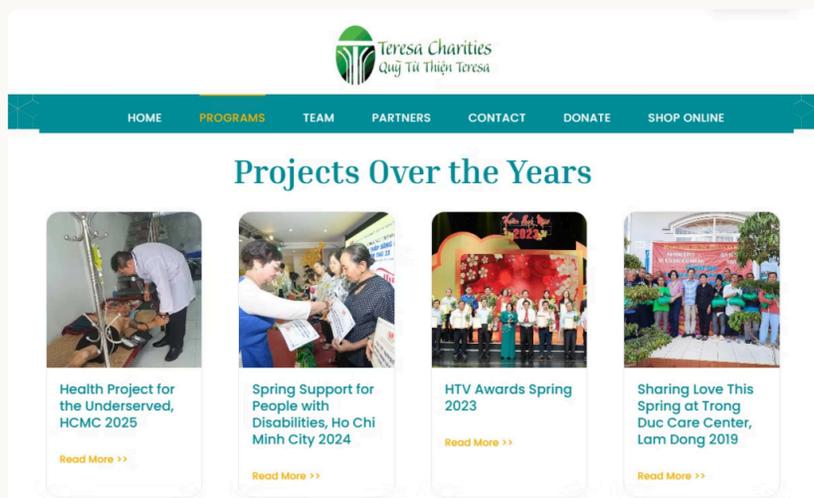


After leaving for college, former student volunteer **Colby Pham** is rejoining AASuccess as an adult volunteer and mentor! His time at AASuccess has allowed him opportunities to practice professionalism, project management, networking, public speaking, as well as interpersonal skills. Currently, Colby is a Junior at George Mason University majoring in Management Information Systems. In his free time, Colby enjoys playing volleyball and listening to music. Colby is excited to be a part of the system of guidance, support, and opportunity that AASuccess provides and is looking forward to “perfecting the act of giving back”.

AASuccess Community's Updates

AASuccess continues to demonstrate its significant impact beyond our core students and members. This focus on blending character-building with business acumen empowers both students and professionals to cultivate resilience and strategic thinking, while our US-IBDC business members benefit by connecting with our resources for strategic partnerships and commitment to local and community impact. Below are our three live examples of our past month's collective work accomplishments:

Update on Teresa Charities being assisted by AASuccess



AASuccess consistently partners with and supports other organizations, such as Bailey Crossroads' Rotary Club. AAS, through our core member Nguyen Nguyen, recently provided crucial pro bono resources to complete both the website and logistics resources for the local Teresa Charities Organization. This illustrates AASuccess's broader commitment to social responsibility and collaboration with the non-profit sector, leveraging our professional skills to drive meaningful change in areas like healthcare and community support.

Hau Giang Charity's Project - Critical Thinking in Action



The success of our recently approved Hau Giang charitable work demonstrates the power of the LEAP model in action. More specifically, AAS core member Nguyen Nguyen effectively exercised her critical thinking skills to not only secure the project's approval from our partner, Prow Sparrow's Charity, but also structure the deal to have \$5,000 channeled back to our operations fund. This strategic allocation will directly support our US-based students' work every Saturday, reinforcing the circular economy of our community where charitable success actively funds our domestic human capital development programs. We have at the same time designed a ready-to-go social business plan to help deliver \$15,000 of charitably non-perishable goods to underserved families in Hau Giang, reflecting our efforts to leverage various resources and the strategic planning skills of our community members to support local livelihoods and our students' professional growth synergistically.

Kao Sarn Thai Joins US-IBDC - Considering a Pledge of Future Impact



The US International Business Development Consortium (US-IBDC), a subsidiary of AASuccess, is actively expanding its network of business core members, who pledge to embrace our values and the work-learn LEAP model. The Kao Sarn Thai example shows that our resources in both business management consulting and performance-based partnership are effective to advance our community's common goals. Following successful initial consulting, Kao Sarn Thai is now strongly considering a powerful next step: formally drafting an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) by October to officially pledge a 10% profit-sharing commitment to the AASuccess general fund. AASuccess, through US-IBDC, is continually seeking and selecting new partners, especially in key sectors like biohealth and other innovative industries, to connect founders, forge strategic win-win partnerships, and amplify our impacts on US-VN projects with core members' active involvement.



Keep the Engine Running with Just \$10/Month!!!

At AASuccess, we believe that every young person deserves the chance to learn, grow, and thrive through life skills training –not to be burdened with fundraising to keep our programs alive. That’s why we are reaching out to you, our community, to join us in sustaining this mission.

A monthly gift of just **\$10** can go a long way in helping us maintain our office operations, provide a stable environment for our students, and keep the “engine” of our programs running smoothly. When you contribute, you’re not just helping with overhead—you’re directly empowering students to stay focused on what matters most: developing leadership, emotional intelligence, and career-life readiness.

We are also excited to share some great news: **AASuccess is now officially listed in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)! Federal employees and retirees can now select AASuccess as a beneficiary using our CFC ID: 88404.**

Your support—whether through the CFC or direct monthly giving—ensures that our students can continue to transform their futures without distraction. Together, we can keep this powerful cycle of mentorship and learning alive.



Join us today with a \$10/month pledge and help fuel the future of our youth!!

Donate online: [AASuccess.org/donate](https://www.aasuccess.org/donate)

AASuccess: Perfecting the Act of Giving Back

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www.aasuccess.org

A community without boundaries, built on the principle that when we invest in character development alongside competence, everyone thrives.