



May E-Newsletter

Nurturing Tomorrow's Leaders Through Our Circular Learning Ecosystem



As we transition from spring into summer, I'm reminded of how growth in nature mirrors the development we foster at AASuccess (AAS). Just as March brought the first blooms of potential showcased in our previous newsletter, May reveals our circular learn-work model that depends on a community that believes in investing in purpose-driven individuals from all walks of life.

What makes our model unique is its sustainability: former mentees become mentors, participants become contributors and/or volunteers, and every resource we invest multiplies in impact. Through our programs, we are able to tap into the strengths and gifts of everyone at AAS, from students to mentors, so that they can reach their best selves. Character and mindset are the focuses of development, and we intend to use that growth to create sustainable change in our communities.

What distinguishes AASuccess? We develop character before credentials. Through our 20-year model and US-IBDC network, students immediately engage real projects - from Vietnam healthcare initiatives to local education programs - regardless of their starting point. No rigid prerequisites, but we do assess for hidden potential and readiness for long-term growth. Just character potential and willingness to grow through our distinctive **3H-3S-3A methodology** (Head-Heart-Hands, See-Seek-Seize, Attitude-Action-Authenticity) and core values: emotional intelligence, courage/grit, innovation, crucial conversations, and empathy.

With \$100,000 annually, we leverage resources strategically: High achievers like YouthCon winners work alongside eighth grade AAS students like Tyler and Leo, creating mutual growth. This mirrors how business professionals engage our network - everyone gains value while contributing to others' development.

In this newsletter, you'll see this principle in action across multiple generations of our ecosystem. From YouthCon scholarship recipients presenting innovative community solutions, to the middle and high school management teams that organized the entire program, to Derica Dang's transformation from shy newcomer to confident researcher, to our new junior college interns developing real-world project experience, each represents a different stage in our development pipeline.

With a modest annual budget under \$100,000, we're developing 30 future leaders through year-round teaching, coaching, mentoring, and impactful project work provided by like-minded adult volunteers. What allows this efficiency is our circular model, wherein students don't just learn skills, they apply them by teaching and leading others, creating an ever-expanding network of impact.

This wouldn't be possible without our dedicated donors and partners. We extend our deepest gratitude to Eden Center, The Plein Family Charitable Trust, Mr. James Pan, Dr. Linh Tran, Dr. Kieu Le, Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads, and The Norman & Douglas Ebenstein family for their continued faith in our work. Your investment goes beyond keeping our lights on; it illuminates paths for young leaders whose contributions will eventually benefit the very community that supported their growth.

Together, we're not just building careers; we're cultivating a mindset of service, innovation, and responsible leadership that will shape our community for generations to come.

Dave Nguyen



Welcoming Our New Junior Interns: The Next Generation of Impact-Driven Leaders

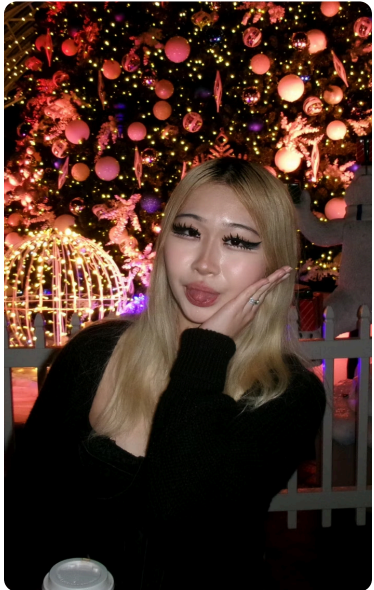
Meet Kathleen Pham, Emily Lieu, and Xandra Phan!

The strength of our circular learning model is perfectly illustrated in our newest US-IBDC Junior Business Development Interns. Each has not only served as a volunteer for our internal engine but also brings unique talents to our social impact projects while benefiting from the mentorship pathway established by predecessors like Vivian Cao-Dao, Angelina Le, Liem Nguyen, and Daniel Nguyen.



Kathleen Pham: Bridging Economic Policy and Community Impact

A third-year economics and public policy student at UVA, Kathleen brings analytical skills and a passion for food security and transportation infrastructure to our team. Under the guidance of Vivian Cao-Dao and Liem Nguyen, Kathleen is focusing on three key initiatives: developing content for the 2025 Biohealth Conference, structuring the YouthCon VN Scholarship Program, and creating fundraising strategies for Gala 2025.



Emily Lieu: Advancing Healthcare Communication Through Research

As a VCU Honors College student pursuing a Biology B.S. with Pre-Med studies, Emily brings her experience as a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant and passion for healthcare equity to US-IBDC's healthcare initiatives. Emily's internship focuses on supporting the Biohealth Conference planning, researching healthcare gaps and medical innovations, and developing an internal communications strategy. Her research on post-operative care for cancer patients in Vietnam directly informs conference programming while addressing real community needs.



Xandra Phan: Leveraging Business Technology for Social Impact

A Business Information Technology major at Virginia Tech with a focus on Cybersecurity Management and Analytics, Xandra brings technical expertise and creative vision to our digital presence and program marketing. Working closely with Kathleen and Emily, Xandra is enhancing US-IBDC's digital presence, developing promotional materials for the YouthCon VN scholarship, creating compelling content for our newsletter, and researching AI-driven solutions for conference management.

Together, these three interns represent the multidisciplinary approach that makes our model effective: combining economic analysis, healthcare expertise, and technological innovation to address complex community challenges. Their summer internships' structured program ensures they will meaningfully contribute to current initiatives while simultaneously developing the leadership capacity to eventually mentor the next generation of participants.

The Power of Reflection: Vivian's Journey from Mentee to Mentor & Project Lead

AASuccess leadership development model



When we featured Vivian Cao-Dao's story in our March 2025 newsletter, we highlighted her transformation from medical school acceptance to continued community leadership development. Today, we explore how her continued working progress exemplifies the deeper purpose of our leadership development approach.

This current work illuminates a cornerstone of the AASuccess approach: we create a safe, trusted, and profoundly transformative environment that embraces various tools and programs to bring resources with direct impact for our students. We don't eliminate challenges; we develop the resilience and wisdom to navigate them productively through character and mindset transformation. This development creates an ecosystem that remains sufficiently attractive to leverage existing resources and draw professionals and healthcare experts who willingly contribute time and efforts in exchange for their own benefits and growth. Vivian's engagement with physicians through our healthcare initiatives while simultaneously mentoring newer college learners like Kathleen Pham of UVA, Emily Lieu of VCU, and Xandra Phan of VA Tech exemplifies this mutual benefit model where everyone reaches their best selves.

Through US-IBDC's practical training platform, Vivian engages with physicians working through our current healthcare initiatives while simultaneously mentoring newer college learners and junior interns like Kathleen Pham of UVA, Emily Lieu of VCU, and Xandra Phan of VA Tech. This dual role, being both learner and teacher, represents the "circular learning" that makes our ecosystem sustainable. As Vivian prepares to coordinate the July 2025 Second AASuccess Biohealth Conference alongside healthcare professionals, she embodies our core belief: true leadership development isn't linear; what we receive, we refine and return to the community that nurtured us.



Celebrating YouthCon 2025: Student-Led Innovation for Community Impact

Leadership development in action



YouthCon 2025, sponsored by Eden Center (Falls Church, Virginia) for more than a decade, demonstrates how AASuccess transforms young learners into effective leaders. This student-led initiative was managed by middle and high school students under the mentorship of our Operations Team, whose members are senior university students of AAS.

Student Leadership in Spotlight: The YouthCon Management Team

Led by Leo Tran and Tyler Le, 8th graders at Katherine Johnson Middle School and Liberty Middle School, the YouthCon 2025 team demonstrated exemplary project management skills by handling every aspect of this complex program, from creating application systems to organizing judging panels and coordinating outreach to schools across the Northern Virginia area. The mentorship from Angelina Le and other senior students taught both Leo and Tyler how to communicate effectively, handle conflicts, and stay accountable under pressure.

!!! YouthCon 2025 Scholarship Recipients !!!

We're proud to announce this year's winners, selected from an impressive pool of applicants who presented innovative solutions to community challenges:



1st place: Elizabeth Uranta, 11th Grade, Osbourn Park High School

Elizabeth's "Empowering Equity Through Access" initiative addresses menstrual inequity in schools through a technology-driven approach. Her mobile-friendly website connects donors, volunteers, and schools to facilitate the donation and distribution of menstrual products, while providing educational resources and impact tracking for transparency.



2nd place: Katie Lopez, Junior, Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Katie's "Spa Day" project will provide homeless individuals with haircuts, pedicures, and hygiene kits to restore dignity and confidence. Starting at a local church with community support, her initiative addresses both physical and psychological well-being for unhoused individuals.



3rd place: Claribel Davis, Freshman, Great Mills High School

Inspired by her late brother, Claribel's "Hope for the Kids" nonprofit initiative aims to fund cancer treatment for children whose families cannot afford care. Starting with website development and awareness building, her project demonstrates how personal experience can fuel meaningful community impact.

YouthCon 2025 demonstrates our resource-leveraging philosophy: Scholarship recipients Elizabeth, Katie, and Claribel now work alongside emerging managers Leo and Tyler. High achievers gain character depth; developing students gain confidence - mutual growth that creates genuine value for all.

Mai Linh Ho exemplifies this model: Former YouthCon recipient, now Co-founder & Chief Product Officer at Gateway, returning as judge. Everyone contributes. Everyone gains.



From School Project to Social Impact: Derica's Agent Orange Research

How Level 1 students develop research skills with real-world applications

When Derica Dang (Junior of Annandale HS) joined AASuccess as a Level 1 student, she was quiet and hesitant about her abilities. Through crucial conversations within AASuccess, she revealed a budding interest in humanitarian issues, particularly the ongoing impact of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Under the guidance of Dave Nguyen, Derica has developed a comprehensive research document examining the historical context of Agent Orange, its ongoing health effects, and the specific challenges facing families in Quang Tri Province. Her findings, including the fact that \$1,000 can build a basic housing unit for affected children, are now informing potential collaboration between AASuccess and NGOs working in Vietnam.

Derica exemplifies our approach: We recognize potential others miss. No impressive résumé required - just curiosity and empathy for humanitarian issues. Through immediate access to real projects via US-IBDC, her Agent Orange research now informs NGO collaborations in Vietnam. Quiet students often create the most profound impact.

Supporting Our Mission

How you can help sustain and expand our impact

The continued success of our circular learning ecosystem depends on partners and year-round, dedicated adult volunteers serving as mentors and coaches, who share our vision for developing purpose-driven leaders capable of creating positive community impact. As we celebrate the achievements of our YouthCon scholars, junior interns, and emerging leaders like Kathleen Pham, we invite you to consider supporting our work in the following ways:

Financial Support

Your investment supports something different: 20-year proven character development without fees or rigid barriers. \$100,000 annually provides immediate project access through US-IBDC that premium programs charge thousands for.

We assess for character potential and readiness for growth rather than requiring perfect transcripts - whether students arrive confident or quietly carrying untapped capabilities. **Goal: \$80,000 by September 30, 2025, to maintain this distinctive accessible model.**

Special Thanks to Our 2025 Supporters

We express our heartfelt gratitude to:

- Eden Center for their continued partnership and primary sponsorship of AAS YouthCon 2025
- The Plein Family Charitable Trust
- Mr. James Pan, Dr. Linh Tran and Dr. Kieu Le for their generous contributions to the essentials of AASuccess
- The Norman & Douglas Ebenstein Family for their steadfast commitment to our mission through the Ebenstein Scholarships directed to qualified Vietnamese American high school students
- Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads
- Asians @ Amazon HQ2
- Ms. Nguyen Nguyen for her generous donation and year-round dedicated support of our operational needs

Volunteer as a Mentor

Share your professional expertise and life experience with our participants. Just 2-4 hours monthly can transform a young person's trajectory.

Provide Internship Opportunities

Help our advanced participants apply their skills in real-world settings through internships at your organization.

Attend Our Events

Join us for our monthly workshops, Business Symposium, or upcoming **AAS Gala 2025 (August 9, 2025 - save the date!)** to witness our ecosystem in action.

Together, we can continue building a community where leadership development isn't limited to those with exceptional academic achievements or financial resources, but available to anyone with the commitment and character to create positive change.

For more information on supporting our mission, please visit our website at aasuccess.org.



#Chilling !!



#Be_Serious !!



Upcoming Event: BizHarmony Networking Event – May 31st, 2025



My name is Kingston Ho, and I am an incoming freshman at Virginia Tech. I am leading a project called BizHarmony, a student-led networking event hosted by AASuccess. BizHarmony aims to connect high school and college students with professionals like you across various industries to promote career exploration, mentorship, and leadership development.

This event will feature organizational booths, free professional headshots, interview preparation, resume reviews, LinkedIn profile assistance, elevator pitch refinement, and mock interviews. It is free and open to all students; complimentary food and beverages are provided.

The event will occur on **Saturday, May 31st, 2025, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM** at the DoubleTree by Hilton in McLean, Tysons.

We would love to have you join us and contribute to the event. Please register using our registration form to secure your spot, as space is limited. Whether you're a student seeking guidance or a professional willing to share your expertise, your participation helps create meaningful connections that strengthen our community. Please also invite your colleagues and friends to maximize our impact!

BIZHARMONY
BRINGING HARMONY, ONE STEP AT A TIME

May 31st, 2025
2:00PM - 5:00 PM
Doubletree by Hilton McLean Tysons

FREE ENTRY
Limited Admission

- JOIN US FOR A UNIQUE NETWORKING EVENT BETWEEN STUDENTS, PROFESSIONALS, AND BUSINESSES
- INCLUDES RESUME WORKSHOPS, INTERVIEW PREP, AND COMPLIMENTARY FOOD AND DRINKS
- OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

REGISTER NOW →

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