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In response to heightened attacks on Asian Americans during the coronavirus outbreak, a pair of local high school students have created a way to share stories of cultural pride.

Brian Gao, a junior at Syosset High School, and Arin Siriamonthep, a senior at Roslyn High School, have created Asians Speak Up, an organization intent on celebrating and embracing Asian heritage.

Gao said that the origins came from seeing videos of racist attacks against Asian people in the weeks following the coronavirus outbreak.

“That for me was very disheartening, especially because Roslyn and Syosset have large Asian communities,” Gao said. “People seem to have this misconception that because the coronavirus originated in Asian countries, all Asian people have it, which was upsetting to me.”

Siriamonthep, who is Thai-American, said the two had been thinking of the idea for a while before the quarantine period came.

“We’ve been thinking of starting this organization for quite a while, not just because of

organization can become something “physical” in the future.

“By seeing all these stories on our page we hope that others will be inspired to share their stories so we can kind of give a face of confidence in the Asian community, that we are proud to be who we are,” Siriamonthep said. “We’re not going to let these attacks bring us down.”

Further information on Asians Speak Up is available at their website, asiansspeakup.com. Their Instagram handle is @asiansspeakup.

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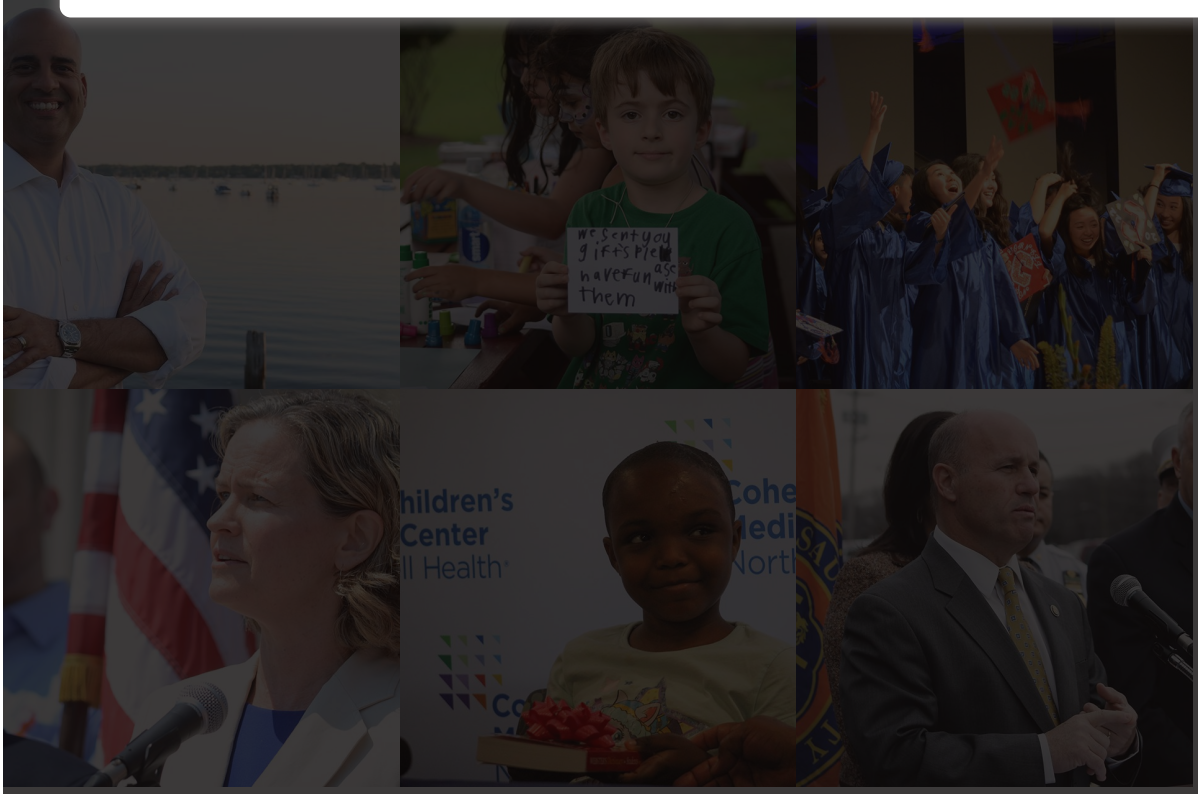
Rose Weldon

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