

Joshua Ryo Cheng

## 2021 TYAF Outstanding Taiwanese American Youth Award

I am writing to apply for the 2021 Outstanding Taiwanese American Youth Award. My application form, resume, and transcript are included in the package- I believe that my background and experience make me an exceptional candidate.

My parents, who were both born in Taiwan, raised me to appreciate the rich and unique traditional Taiwanese culture that they were brought up in. Since my entire family lives in Taiwan, my parents have always only spoken to me in Mandarin or Taiwanese, so much so that it feels strange and uncomfortable to speak in English at home. Through my mastery of these languages, I have been able to establish great relationships with my relatives and grandparents by constantly talking to them on the phone throughout the year. It is these conversations that help me get a further glimpse of the Taiwanese world and they greatly help me look forward to the next family trip to Taiwan.

Ever since I was a kid, I have always been actively involved in the Taiwanese community through volunteering at WDCTS and TAAGWC events such as the Moon Festival and Lunar New Year. This year, I have furthered my role as a preserver of Taiwanese culture in America by completing my training as a FASCA student ambassador. Under this title, I organized and led numerous events to introduce and promote Taiwanese culture in the United States. My events have been designed in ways which help Taiwanese Americans increase their visibility in the community by using artwork to advertise Taiwanese culture in large well-established events like Potomac Day and the Kentland/Lakeland 5K Run. Through these events and volunteering opportunities, I have met hundreds of fellow ABT students with whom I have formed great friendships because of our similar position in holding together the great spheres of Taiwanese and American societies. I feel as though it is our responsibility as American Born Taiwanese to encourage global support of the Taiwanese nation.

Despite my deep connection with Taiwanese culture and my involvement in its diffusion within the United States, I have focused much of my energy into my academic and intellectual development. I am currently a Junior at Winston Churchill High School and have maintained a perfect unweighted GPA of 4.0 with many honors and awards. I have also been very active in my school community, participating in the school chorus, math club, hack club, and varsity swim and dive team. Amongst all the different subjects, I am

most interested in mathematics and computer science. Since my school does not offer much variety in the field of computer science, I have taken it upon myself to learn programming languages like R and Python through online courses. Using these skills, I earned the opportunity to work as a Data Science Trainee at Axle Informatics, Rockville, MD where I engineered large bioimaging datasets for machine learning analysis. In the future, I hope to pursue a career in which computers and numbers play a big role.

Outside of school, I am an accomplished athlete and classical guitarist. Since the age of 6, I have swum competitively in the nation's top swim club. I am ranked A+ in multiple events on the USA Swimming leaderboard. I have also played baseball for 9 years and have been selected for the all-star's teams several times. Additionally, I am a great fan of music, having won numerous awards in guitar competitions since I started playing at the age of 7. With my musical talent, I served as the accompaniment for the school chorus.

I greatly enjoy the balance of both the Taiwanese and American aspects of my life. As a young Taiwanese American, I hope that my future success will allow me to create more connections between American and Taiwanese cultures and increase the global influence of Taiwanese society.