



Love, Action, and Hope

CYOC Joins SWE Charity Appreciation Event, Witnessing the Power of Collaboration

By Ruichen Feng (CYOC)



On the evening of September 10, 2025, the nonprofit organization So What Else (SWE) held its first-ever “Partner & Sponsor Appreciation Event” at Silo Falls in Brookeville, MD. Representatives from 25 nonprofit and philanthropic partner organizations, along with nearly 85 volunteers and supporters, gathered to celebrate past achievements, share experiences, and envision future community initiatives. The Capital Youth Outreach Club (CYOC) attended as one of SWE’s 25 partner organizations.

Inspiring Opening Remarks

The event began at 5:00 PM with networking, allowing guests to exchange experiences and insights about community service. At 6:30 PM, SWE Co-Founder and Executive Director Dave Silbert delivered the opening speech.

Silbert reflected on his 17-year journey with SWE, sharing both the challenges he faced and the joy of serving the community. He emphasized that serving others is not only a responsibility but also a journey of the heart. Silbert expressed his hope that the event would strengthen connections among organizations and foster new partnerships to advance society and empower communities. He emphasized that, as leaders, our mission is to pave the way to serve humanity. He hopes that everyone in this event will leave this room stronger than when they entered, carrying the spirit of service in our hearts and souls. After his remarks, he invited representatives from partner organizations to share their stories and words on stage.

Heartfelt Performance

Following the speech, the event featured a moving performance. The highlight was when all attendees joined in singing “Love, Love, Love, All You Need Is Love”, filling the hall with a message of unity, care, and hope. Many guests were deeply touched, and the warm atmosphere reflected SWE’s commitment to love and service. CYOC

expressed pride in being part of such a compassionate and socially responsible network.

About So What Else (SWE)

SWE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting underserved communities in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area through hunger relief, youth programs, and service-learning opportunities. SWE’s mission is to improve the lives of children and families by providing food security, essential household items, and high-quality out-of-school programs covering literacy, athletics, and visual and performing arts. At the same time, SWE encourages young people to give back through volunteer service, creating a cycle of community empowerment.

In the U.S., tens of thousands of children are left unsupervised after school, and roughly 20% face food insecurity, while 8 billion pounds of food are wasted annually. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent inflation have further intensified these challenges for low-income families. SWE addresses these needs through three main areas: emergency hunger relief, youth development programs, and volunteer opportunities. SWE is one of the largest hunger-relief organizations in the Greater Washington area, distributing approximately 300,000 pounds of food and thousands of essential items weekly through over 150 locations. In addition, SWE runs more than 100 after-school programs and summer camps, providing safe spaces, academic support, and food assistance to children. Each year, approximately 3,150 children from 55 underserved communities benefit from these programs, which promote academic growth, teamwork, mental wellness, and environmental awareness. SWE also offers over 30,000 hours of volunteer opportunities annually, encouraging community members of all ages to actively engage.

CYOC’s Participation

CYOC, founded in 2018, is a youth-led,

community-driven nonprofit that empowers young people through community service, leadership development, educational enrichment, and cultural engagement, with a focus on celebrating AAPI heritage. CYOC representatives at the event included **Dr. Ping Lu**, Maryland Governor’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs member and CYOC adult advisor; youth leaders **Ruichen Feng** and **George Wang**; as well as other adult advisors and members.

George Wang’s Journey

Youth representative from CYOC, George Wang shared his remarkable story. He joined CYOC in sixth grade and has actively participated in SWE volunteer activities, now entering eighth grade. George reflected on his experiences: from assisting with food distributions to organizing summer clothing and toy donation drives, and supporting this year’s Youth Summer Olympic Games. He expressed pride in working alongside CYOC peers and SWE to make a positive community impact and develop his leadership skills. Guests applauded his inspiring story, witnessing the dedication and potential of the next generation.



CYOC and SWE Collaboration Achievements

Since 2022, CYOC and SWE have partnered on multiple initiatives, including winter and summer clothing drives, holiday gift donations, school and sports supplies collections, weekly food distribution, and community outreach. During the 2024 Thanksgiving and 2025 Summer donation campaigns, they collected and distributed over 15,000 essential items, helping thousands of families. They also promoted SWE’s programs through Chinese-language media. This summer’s Youth Summer Olympic Games brought together youth from diverse backgrounds to celebrate friendship, equity, and inclusion.

Looking Ahead

The appreciation event highlighted SWE’s gratitude toward partners, sponsors, and volunteers, and showcased the tangible impact of collaboration. CYOC plans to continue strengthening its partnership with SWE, expanding efforts in community service, youth education, and cultural programs to bring warmth and hope to families across Maryland and Washington, D.C. Love is our shared language, and service is our common mission. The stories and songs from the event demonstrated that when we work together, communities can flourish. CYOC will continue to serve and give back, working alongside others to create a brighter future.

