

Are we molding a generation whose brains never reset and their bodies never run free, on their own? I often think of trades that are overlooked and noticeably absent from our collective future that we envision for our kids. Houses will still need to be built, pipes will still need to be fixed, and air conditioners will still need to be repaired in the dead of the summer. We celebrate the child who learns a programming language at 8, but rarely the one who learns how to hold a wrench. Maybe, just maybe, the future will belong not only to the ones who code but also to the ones who can fix, build, and create with their hands. Jobs like carpentry, HVAC maintenance, plumbing, and electrical work—what I affectionately call “handy dandy jobs” will become gold mines of opportunity for these kids. These roles resist automation, because no matter how fast AI evolves, you can’t outsource a leaky faucet to an algorithm or have a robot rewire your house. Bridges will always need welding. Cars will always need fixing. A mechanic’s hands-on knowledge can’t be replaced by predictive AI alone. The physical world doesn’t run on software updates, it runs on the people who keep it moving.

Sometimes I worry: what if all of the boot camps, coding classes, and rigid schedules amount to nothing? What if, in the chase to prepare my child for a future that keeps shifting, I’ve accidentally taken away the simple fun of being a kid? The scraped knees, the long afternoons of unstructured play, the joy of just being?

It’s just a thought, and maybe I’m wrong. Maybe it’s not all doom and gloom the way my mind sometimes paints it. Perhaps our children, unlike us, will be more adaptive, finding their own niches in a world we can’t fully predict. Maybe they’ll thrive in ways we never imagined. As a parent, I can’t help but ask myself: am I giving my 6 year old the foundation to succeed or am I crowding out the very childhood that should carry him there? I guess we’ll cross that bridge when we get there.

NCNC Teen Council Year in Review



Pratigya Banjade

As we wrap up the 2024-2025 season of NCNC Teen Council, we are proud to reflect on a year lively with growth, collaboration, and impact. From academic guidance to career-building and community celebration, each event this year contributed to our mission of supporting and has uplifted Nepali teens in the RTP community in preparation for high school and life beyond higher education.

We kicked off the year with a Common App Discussion Panel with students seeking clarity on the college application process. Our panelists provided valuable insights on navigating Common App essays, recommendation letters, and the website in general. Through a panel on Financial Literacy, teens learned about budgeting basics, understanding credit, and exploring potential career paths and job opportunities. It was an empowering event that helped students envision their financial futures. Teens also had the opportunity to learn more about the different AP Classes through a panel on Advanced Placement Courses, where current high school students shared their firsthand experiences and advice about balancing AP coursework, preparing for exams, and choosing the right classes for their goals. We welcomed the holiday season warmly with a Holiday Social where laughter, games, and good food brought everyone together in the spirit of the season. During the Financial Independence & Retire Early (FIRE) panel, teens learned

about long-term financial planning. From passive income to smart saving, the session explored strategies for building wealth and saving smart from a young age. Teens also had the opportunity to build strong LinkedIn profiles and define personal brands in today's digital age through a session on LinkedIn & Personal Branding. In collaboration with our community, we also participated in the Apex EarthFest to promote sustainability, environmental awareness, and reminded us of our role in global citizenship. In support of a local mission of H3 Health Healing Hope to provide healthcare for the homeless and those with no health insurance, NCNC Teen Council hosted a sand volleyball fundraiser with competition, and meaningful contribution. At our virtual event on The Art & Science of Learning, students explored how memory, mindset, and motivation all influence academic growth. With insights from experts who focused on student-centered learning, it was a fitting finale for a year full of learning. We laced up for a lively bowling social event, where teens came together one last time to unwind, connect, and celebrate the community we built.

Teens also had the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the college application process through a mentorship program in collaboration with Duke Diya. Each participant was thoughtfully matched with a mentor who shared similar academic or extracurricular interests, allowing for personalized guidance and meaningful conversations. At the conclusion of the program, students had the chance to meet their mentors in person and tour Duke University, providing both inspiration and a firsthand glimpse into college life.

This year's success would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our advisors Niveeta Sharma and Dr. Archana Lamichhane, our aide Pratigya Banjade, and our dedicated co-leads Grishma Kuikel and Sauryavi Dhakal. Their vision and leadership kept the momentum going month after month. A special thank you to our guest panelists who generously shared their time

and expertise. And of course, thank you to every teen, volunteer, parent who showed up, asked questions, helped set up, and made our events what they were, we couldn't have done it without you.

Here is to another year of growing, learning, and supporting one another. See you next year!

If you have any feedback or would like to contribute to Teen Council, please send an email to ncnc@ncnepal.org.

