

How Cultural Storytelling Connects Us Across Generations

Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month is more than a moment of recognition. It is an invitation to understand how culture shapes the way we see one another.

There is a responsibility that comes with storytelling. Not just to inform, but to reveal meaning and bring people closer to perspectives they may not have otherwise seen. At Promena, this remains central to how we elevate narratives that move beyond observation into understanding.

I remember my first trip to Japan. We arrived through Narita International Airport and made our way by train to Hamamatsu, taking in the landscape and the quiet historical depth that seemed to unfold along the journey. The clean roads and fast trains were remarkable, but it was more than that. It was the experience of being welcomed into a tea gathering, the quiet intention behind each moment, and even the unexpected delight of delicious chocolate shared with care. It reflected the full culture, expressed in ways both subtle and memorable.

What deepened that experience was having family living there. It shifted my view from observation to a deeper sense of awareness. I began to understand that culture is not something you visit. It is something you feel.

As I watch my daughter, a middle schooler, step into that same discovery, it becomes clear that this kind of exposure is a non-negotiable for how the next generation expands its view of the world.

She is drawn to the sound and storytelling of K-pop, a global expression rooted in South Korea that has become part of everyday culture in the United States. Through artists like BTS and BLACKPINK, she connects to themes that reflect identity, confidence, and finding her place. What begins as music becomes exposure. What feels like entertainment becomes a way for her to learn about the world, understand different cultures, and see how people express who they are.

Her curiosity also shows up through books and storytelling. *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin introduces her to stories inspired by Chinese heritage, while series like Pokémon and other anime she is discovering, from lighthearted to more story-driven series, along with films such as *My Neighbor Totoro*, a gentle and imaginative story offer narratives grounded in imagination, family, and emotional awareness.

Not every example comes directly from Asian American creators, but each reflects cultural roots from Asia that continue to influence identity and storytelling in meaningful ways. This connection shows how culture travels, evolves, and finds relevance across generations.

At Promena, this is where narrative carries weight and culture informs us how we relate to one another. When stories are told with appreciation, they create alignment and allow us to see one another clearly without requiring sameness.

My journey, from experiencing Hamamatsu, Japan firsthand to watching my daughter engage with global culture through music and literature, continues to shape how I approach storytelling.

It is a reminder that as the world continues to change, it remains our responsibility to stay open, to learn from one another, and to honor the cultures that shape how we live, and how we engage, especially as we recognize Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

D’Ericka Stevenson is the Executive Editor of Promena: Set the Standard, leading editorial voice, and content strategy with a focus on clarity and impact. She holds a degree in English and Communications from North Carolina State University and is completing a master’s degree in counseling, strengthening her ability to understand the story behind the words. As Founder/CEO of MUSHY Guru, D’Ericka is also a playwright for national stage productions, with experience in film scripts through mentorship with notable media productions.

About Mushy Guru

Mushy Guru is a company that helps bring writers’ stories to life and lends its name to the blog. The name reflects its meaning: Meaningful Useful Stories that Help You and Meaningful Useful Solutions that Heal You. Using coaching as a tool, it guides individuals from thought to paper and from coaching to completion through a clear process and structured support.