Cease Fire. Our Pens Against State Guns.

- Tommy Le, a twenty-year-old Vietnamese youth, who was expected to graduate from Career Link on June 14, was shot and killed in Burien that day by a King County Sheriff responding to a call about someone holding a knife. Tommy was actually holding a pen.

- Charleena Lyles, a pregnant Black mother, was killed in Seattle by Seattle Police officers on June 18, after calling 911 for help.

- Giovonn Joseph-McDade, a twenty-year-old Green River College student was killed in Kent by Des Moines Police on June 24, after a traffic violation and a car chase.

API Chaya seeks to end systemic violence in our communities. We are grieving the losses of these three lives at the hands of law enforcement. We are feeling intense rage at the ongoing traumas our communities have to bear witness to and hold. We cannot heal as this onslaught continues. We call on law enforcement to cease fire. Cease fire on our communities. Cease fire on our bodies. Cease fire on our hearts. Cease fire on our minds. Cease fire. We are made of skin and flesh and bone and blood. We carry pens. We are someone’s child. Charleena was a mother protecting her children.

In these times, when the failures of our systems are so loud, so present, so boldly violent, we call on you, our beloved community, to raise your voices. Wield your pens. State your truth. We call on you to hold your loved ones dear and to be heart-led warriors for peace, safety and wellness in our communities. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.

On the morning of Thursday, July 6, API Chaya will be presenting on Transformative Justice at a shop talk for the Coalition Ending Gender Based Violence, because we believe that we can create community-driven, survivor-centered responses to harm. We invite you to join us. Registration information can be found here.

On the evening of Friday, July 21, API Chaya will hold a self defense and boundary setting workshop for communities of color. Building Autonomy and Safety for Everybody (BASE) is a wellness and self-defense class that is a response to the violence happening to women, trans and queer people all over the world. In partnership with API Chaya, this space was created by and for queer people of color. According to BASE, “We see self-defense as a community-based strategy to defend our bodies, livelihood, and communities and as inherent to self-determination. We believe that cultivating healing and resilience combats trauma from violence and oppression. We want to create a space where survivors can build power to transform systems that perpetuate violence in our lives.” More information is available here on our FaceBook event page.