



JANUARY 2024

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SiVY IS BACK! [Silicon Valley Youth Bridge](#) is reviving and thriving with the good ol' events and games we all remember and love! Casual Fridays are back every week and so are Pizza Party Tournaments.

Leading the revival is a reorganized SiVY committee with "Working Group" volunteers Amber Lin, Kevin Rosenberg, Will Watson, Kai Eckert, and Shankar Iyer and "Advisory Group" volunteers Debbie Rosenberg, Stephanie Youngquist, and Mukund Thapa; the perfect mix of new blood and experienced veterans. Our volunteers include many parents and youth: Cornelius Duffie, Brandon Ge, Kayden Ge, Xin Ge, Serena Guo, Eugene Hung, Qing Lu, Max Schireson, Olivia Schireson, Alan Templeton (webmaster), Brent Xiao, Michael Xu, Brian Zhang, Qiang Zhang.

Together, we will keep promoting bridge to young players in the Bay Area!

Upcoming Events

We are continuing our [Casual Fridays](#) every Friday from 6-8 pm for kids and 8-10 pm for young adults. Stop by for some tasty pizza and bridge fun!

[Pizza Party Tournaments](#) are every two months with a fun theme. They will award prizes and ACBL masterpoints:

- **Saturday, February 10th 11am-3pm:**
"Lunar New Year" Duplicate — we'll start with a pre-game mini-lesson on snapdragon doubles in honor of the year of the dragon!
- **Saturday, April 13th 11am-3pm:**
Spring Duplicate, Theme TBD
- **Sunday, June 16th 11am-3pm:**
Father's Day "Parent-Child"/Family Game

[Summer Camp](#) is going to be a little bit different this time around! We are hosting a 2-day boot camp on two separate weekends leading up to the Youth NABC:

- **Saturday-Sunday June 22nd-23rd, 1-6pm**
- **Saturday-Sunday June 29th-30th, 1-6pm**

Silicon Valley Youth Bridge ~ 2024 Spring/Summer Programs

LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE!
MAKE FRIENDS, EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN, & HAVE FUN

CASUAL FRIDAYS 

Guided instructional play!
For new & experienced players.
Every Friday, 6-8PM w/ pizza
\$5 entry fee

PIZZA PARTY TOURNAMENTS 

Fun, beginner-friendly bridge tournaments!
Win prizes & ACBL masterpoints.
Sat Feb 10 & Sat Apr 13 | Youth Games
Sun Jun 16 | "Parent-Child"/Family Game
All games are 11 am-3 pm w/ pizza
\$5 entry fee

SUMMER CAMP 

2 weekends of world-class instruction & fun activities!
For new & experienced players.
Jun 22-23 and/or Jun 29-30, 1-6pm
\$50 per weekend "early bird" fee; register by May 18
\$80 per weekend regular fee; register by Jun 1

ALL EVENTS AT PALO ALTO BRIDGE CENTER
432A STIERLIN ROAD, MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94043

LEARN MORE AND SIGN-UP FOR OUR PROGRAMS AT
[SILICONVALLEYOUTHBRIDGE.ORG](https://siliconvalleyyouthbridge.org)

Contact organizer Amber Lin (sivybridge@gmail.com) with any questions.

[Download our 2024 Spring/Summer flier](#)

Camp is open to brand new players and existing players, with customized lessons taught by world-class teachers. You can come for one weekend or both weekends. Each weekend's program is different, but both will finish off with a mini-tournament on Sunday. Join us for some intensive learning and competitive fun!

The Youth NABC will be held in **Toronto, July 25-27**. This amazing tournament is the pinnacle annual event of the youth bridge community. Hundreds of young players attend. Prizes include \$1,000 scholarships in the main pairs and teams events. We would love to bring a large SiVY cohort as a part of this celebration of bridge! SiVY members may also apply for a \$600 stipend to help with travel costs. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there!



Big room of fun at 2023 Youth NABC in Chicago



N/S are SiVY kids competing in the 2019 YNABC (so are players wearing the same purple shirt as North)

2023 Programs Recap

Casual Friday

The first program to return was Casual Friday – our weekly supervised play with plenty of pizza and snacks! Since November 2023, we have held nine events with 38 different players, a large number of whom had never played bridge before. Our January record has hit an all time high of 21 and 22 kids in the last two weeks! There also have been ten volunteers under age 26, all SiVY players from pre-COVID.

Casual Fridays are held on Friday evenings, with “Kids Under 18” from 6-8 pm and “Young Adults” from 8-10 pm. However, the schedule has become quite loose, as many of the players in the kids’ section want to keep playing bridge past 8pm! SiVY doesn’t exclusively welcome youth into their doors. Parents are also welcome to hang around and join in the fun. Many stay and watch the youth as they learn bridge skills. Not only that but Xin Ge, a frequent SiVY volunteer, occasionally hosts a parent’s section for parents who want to play!



Young Adults playing their first bridge game at SiVY.



A bustling room of SiVY kids, parents, and volunteers.



Celebrations after making 4♦x with two overtricks!



Xin Ge hosts a parents' / grandparents' table.



Kayden and Brian point out a sharp line of play.

Holiday Pizza Party, Individual Game, & New Life Master Celebration

While official SiVY activities paused during the pandemic, a group of former SiVY players led by Michael Xu and Amber Lin continued to host a bi-annual holiday party and individual game in December of 2022 and July of 2023 at the Palo Alto Bridge Center. This party is now an official staple of SiVY!



Michael Xu, host and long-time SiVY Player (standing up in the gray jacket in the back) kicks off the celebration by creatively introducing all of the players and volunteers.

The Winter Holiday Party & Individual Game was held on Saturday, December 23rd. 16 junior and young adult players from ages 8 to 26 participated in the holiday individual tournament, directed by Will Watson and Kai Eckert. Players included former SiVY members and brand-new players. It was amazing to have such a range of ages, personalities, and skill levels all competing together! The room was full of banter and laughter. After the individual game, members stuck around for board discussion, pizza, and cake. Special shout-out to our big winners! The party ended with a new Life Master celebration for all SiVY players who had achieved Life Master since the start of the pandemic. New life masters get to add their names to our Lifemaster Plaque. Congratulations to our New LMs!



*Individual Game Winners, from left to right:
1st Overall - Elijah Schacter (with a monstrous 79%)
Flight B - Kyra Helmbold (51%) & Flight C - Michael Hoagland (59%)*



*New LM Celebration, from left to right:
Amber Lin, Kayden Ge, Michael Xu, Brandon Ge
Not pictured: Andrew Chen, Brian Zhang, Charlie Chen, Stella Wan*

Winter Camp

We hosted SiVY's first-ever Winter Camp from Tuesday 12/26 to Friday 12/29! The four-day camp was modeled off of SiVY's summer camps held every June from 2014 to 2019. We had 17 campers from ages 6 to 26, including 15 kids and 2 young adults. Our 6 camp counselors included a former summer camper, Cornelius Duffie, and 3 former summer camp counselors - Kai Eckert, Kevin Rosenberg, and Will Watson. The Young Adults participated in a 2-day boot camp on Tuesday and Wednesday led by Kevin Rosenberg. The Kids' Camp was held from 2-6:30 pm every day from Tuesday to Friday. There was one table of "intermediate" players and four tables of brand-new players.



Group photo of "kids" Winter Camp with campers and counselors.
Not pictured: Counselors Olivia Schireson and Cornelius Duffie.



Team "Sweaty Trivia Smarties" solving bridge trivia



Kevin Rosenberg teaches the young adults



Olivia teaches experienced players



Cookie Decorating!



3 tables of brand-new players!

Olivia Schireson led experienced players providing supervised play and advanced card play and bidding lessons; two of them, Kevin Wei (3rd grade) and Jeremy Zhang (6th grade), played in the 0-20 section after camp at the Wednesday evening PABC game. They even bid and made a game that nobody else in the field did!

New players learned mini-bridge on Day 1, declarer play technique on Day 2, bidding on Day 3, and played in their first tournament on Day 4. Amber Lin, Kai Eckert, Will Watson, and Cornelius Duffie led the new players. The program included lessons, supervised play, and some fun activities such as races for sorting hands, counting HCPs, and completing the shape. There was also suit-symbol cookie decorating and bridge-themed team trivia.



Campers play in the duplicate tournament following the instruction days of the camp

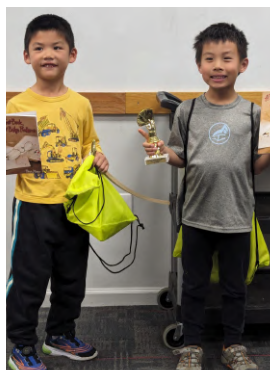
Both intermediate and beginner players competed in a 10-board duplicate tournament on the final day. Several other SiVY players who did not attend camp joined too. This was the first tournament for most of the players! Congratulations to the winners!



*Jeremy Zhang
& Kevin Wei
1st Overall*



*Beatrice Hung
& Alexandre Luong
2nd Overall*



*Larry Wei
& Oscar Li
1st in Beginners*



*Will Woodall
& Kate Abrams
2nd in Beginners,
4th-6th grade*



*Milly Jain
& Anny Jain
2nd in Beginners,
1st-3rd grade*



Berkeley Bridge Club President and long-time SiVY member Jonathan Yue introduces bridge basics at Splash!

Berkeley Splash!

On November 18th, SiVY volunteers Amber Lin and Kevin Rosenberg worked with Berkeley Bridge Club members Jonathan Yue and Zachary Yan to teach bridge to middle and high school students through Berkeley Splash!, a bi-annual day of student-led learning for local youth. Jonathan originally learned bridge through SiVY. The 2-hour class was attended by 12 students in 8th-10th grade and used materials from the Berkeley Bridge Club's "DeCal" bridge class.

New LMs Feature

Three members of our SiVY family achieved the title of Life Master in 2022 and 2023. Congratulations to Michael Xu, Kayden Ge, and Stella Wan! Special shout-out to former SiVY member Charlie Chen who is not featured here but achieved LM in June 2022; he is now crushing bridge in Texas with his brother, the youngest LM title holder Andrew!

Michael Xu (August 2022)



Michael playing at an NABC.



Michael and Finn Kolesnik won the U21 pairs at the World Youth Transnationals 2022.



Michael with his Amherst collegiate club.

Michael "Big Mike" Xu is known for his confidence and charisma in the SiVY community. He started the tradition of making introductions at our holiday parties and never fails at making the room erupt in laughter. Michael is also a prominent bridge advocate! He started a successful collegiate bridge club at Amherst which you can read about on [Bridgewinners](#) and he did [an interview](#) with the Setting Trick about his bridge teaching as a high schooler.

Michael achieved his Life Master title in the most humble way possible: "Just a random club game". Talk about doing things backward. He had substantially more than enough Masterpoints at the time and just needed a few black; the very next month he reached the title of Bronze Life Master (750 MPs) and he is only 35 master points away from Silver Life Master (1,000 MPs). His masterpoint count doesn't nearly begin to describe his force in the bridge world!

Michael has numerous bridge achievements. At NABCs, he placed 2nd in GNT C in 2019 (on an all-youth team with SIVY friends Brandon Ge, Jonathan Yue, and Aravind Alwan), placed 2nd in the Freeman Mixed BAM Teams in 2022 (with SiVY friend Olivia Schireson), and won the 0-2500 Spingold in 2023. He has also represented the USA numerous times, most recently in Veldhoven, Netherlands last year on the U21 USA1 team with partner and SiVY member Olivia Schireson and junior powerhouses Bohan Zhu and Harrison Luba, making it to the QF and winning a silver medal in the BAM event. At the 2022 Transnationals in Salsomaggiore, Italy, he took the world by storm: he won both the U21 pairs with Finn Kolesnik and the U26 teams events. However, his most memorable and surprising result was coming in *last place* during the Individual event out of 152 players with a 34.83%!

Michael first played bridge with SIVY during one of the Pizza Parties, and came in first! First-place winners got to choose prizes and he selected a bridge book: The Cardturner, a book by Louis Sachar (author of Holes) following the story of how a teenager builds an unbreakable bond with his blind great uncle through bridge. We are proud to have him as a part of our SIVY family and wish him the best in the continuance of his bridge life!

Stella Wan (October 2022)



Stella (second from left) with her 2023 USA team, including long-time friends from SiVY.



Stella playing at the 2023 Youth World Championships in her signature cap.



Throwback: Stella and Olivia Schireson at a SiVY event in 2015.

Stella Wan is an OG SiVY member who now lives in San Francisco. She is a software engineer at Databricks and recently graduated from UC Berkeley. She is also a talented dancer and performs with several dance teams in the Berkeley area. You can frequently catch her at bridge tournaments all over the Bay Area!

Stella achieved her Life Master in October 2022 in an Open A/X Swiss event in 2022 at the Reno-Sparks Regional, teaming with friends Kevin Rosenberg, Brent Xiao, and Richard Jeng. They went into the event knowing Stella was on the cusp of becoming Life Master... specifically, with a 2nd place finish! Not an easy task when two of the teams were stacked to the brim with top-tier professionals. There was a team cleanly pulling away with first place, so they had to secure 2nd place, and finally achieved it with a narrow 4 VP margin ahead of 3rd. Fast forward through another extremely bridge-filled year. Stella attended 6 sectionals, 4 regionals, 2 nationals, and a Junior United States Bridge Championship amassing an additional 303.34 Masterpoints! This pushed her up to Bronze Life Master!

In addition to local success, Stella won the 2019 Collegiate Bridge Bowl for UC Berkeley with Kevin Rosenberg, Armin Askari, Jesse Chao, and Foster Tom. She has represented the US twice, playing on the USA1 U21 team in the 2018 in Wujiang, China with SIVY friends Cornelius Duffie, Kevin Huang, Brent Xiao, and Adrian Youngquist, as well as Richard Jeng. They were 9th in the round robin and 4th in the BAM. She then qualified for the USA2 U21 team in

2019 with SIVY friends Michael Hu, Arthur Zhou, Cornelius Duffie, Brent Xiao, and Richard Jeng, but the event was canceled due to COVID-19. However, Stella made a comeback last year on the USA2 U26 team at the World Championships in Veldhoven, Netherlands, and her SiVY teammates Brent Xiao, Cornelius Duffie, and Amber Lin, as well as friends Cynthia Huang and Richard Jeng. The team finished 13th in the round robin and 12th in the BAM.

One of Stella's first SiVY memories is the first time she came to a SIVY pizza party: a room full of young enthusiastic bridge lovers eating pizza and playfully competing against each other. Stella was playing with Olivia Schireson. It was their first time playing together, but they pulled out a 1st place win! SIVY is glad to be part of Stella's bridge journey!

Kayden Ge (October 2023)



Kayden (3rd from left) winning his U16 Bronze Medal at the 2023 World Championships.



Kayden teaches Kevin Wei at Casual Friday.



Throwback: Kayden at the Parent-Child (Family) Game in 2017.

15-year-old Kayden Ge is an important member of our SIVY community! Once a wee lad attending SIVY events and learning from mentors, he has now become a powerful bridge player, teaching the next generation himself.

Kayden achieved Life Master 5 months ago at a Sectional at the Palo Alto Bridge Center. Kayden was playing in an A/X Open Teams with an epic all-SIVY team composed of himself, Kevin Rosenberg, Brian Zhang, and his brother Brandon Ge. They faced fierce competition, including a team with nearly a total of 30,000 combined masterpoints, and a team composed of Kayden's father, Brian's parents, and SIVY member Brent Xiao! Fortuitously, Kayden's team played against his father's team in the last matchup, who was trailing their score by 6 VPs. They pulled off the win by 14 IMPs, skyrocketing Kayden's team into a comfortable first place and earning him his Life Master title! There is no better way to earn Life Master than playing with your friends and beating your parents in the last round to do it!

Kayden has also been competing in regionals and nationals all over the country and putting up many great results! He recently placed 8th at the 2023 All Western Championship and won the 2024 District 21 NAP B qualifier with Brian Zhang. At the 2022 Transnationals in Salsomaggiore, Italy, he placed 2nd in the U16 Teams with fellow SIVY friends Brian Zhang, Andrew Chen, and Charlie Chen. The next year, they played in the World Youth Team Championships in Veldhoven, Netherlands. They dominated the Round Robin stage with 287 VPs out of 380 VPs, 42 VPs ahead of 2nd-place. They eventually won the bronze medal by 1 IMP in a close match!

Kayden has come a long way from his first SIVY event back in 2017 when he had his first experience with bridge, where he met his best friends Brian Zhang, Charlie Chen, and Andrew Chen. It's amazing that they all started together and are now competing on the world stage! We will continue to support them on their bridge journey!