



OCA

EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF CHINESE AND ASIAN PACIFIC  
AMERICANS

San Mateo County Chapter P.O. Box 218 San Mateo, CA  
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Established in 1987, the OCA San Mateo Chapter is one of the four chapters in the Bay Area and one of the seven chapters in California. OCA (Organization of Chinese Americans) is a national nonprofit nonpartisan, civil rights advocacy and educational organization dedicated to embracing the hopes and aspirations and advancing the social, political and economic well being of Americans of Chinese and Asian descent.

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

By *Martin Jung*

OCA San Mateo had the pleasure of co-sponsoring the Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration. This public event was the perfect opportunity to reach out, bring awareness to the young and old of various nationalities, and to share the diversity of the Asian culture through arts and crafts, stories, and entertainment. Hosted at the Foster City Library,

*Cassie Chen playing the Erhu*



the celebration also promoted the local library. The event was a collaborative effort that combined the teamwork of the Foster City Library, OCA San Mateo Chapter, and The Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc., (Asian American Books). It took place on Saturday, May 21, 2011, from 10:00am to 4:00pm, with free admission.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month began as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week in May 1979. It was enacted by federal law on October 2, 1978, when President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution - public law 95-419. However, it was not until May 1993, that Asian Pacific American Heritage Week became a permanent month-long event.

May was selected for Asian Pacific Month for two sig-



(left to right) Foster City Library Manager Barbara Blanchard and Public Service Librarian Cynthia Rider

nificant events in history that took place in May. On May 7, 1843, Nakahama Manjiro (aka: John Mung or John Manjiro) became the first Japanese immigrant to arrive in the United States. Then on May 10, 1869 the transcontinental railroad was completed in large measure by Chinese laborers.

Through this law, America continues to honor the achievements of Asian Pacific Americans and recognize their contributions to the United States.

At this year's Asian Pacific



Chloe Tsang teaching Calligraphy

American Heritage Celebration, Cassie Chen and her friends got emotions flowing by playing traditional Chinese instruments, giving listeners an appreciation of Chinese music. Following them, Khemarin Cambodian Dance Troupe delighted the audience with their dance. Filipino-American Association of Foster City also filled the audience with light-heartedness through their dancing, while Lukas Brockenbrough's brought about

Urisawe Korean Drum Group



laughter through singing Tagalog songs. The multi-talented musicians, Urisawe Korean Culture Center Performers captured the audience's attention with their drums, bright costumes and dancing.

On the arts and crafts side, Rebecca Tien and Sally Lok worked side by side with Vicky Mihara Avery, an origami instructor and co-owner of Mountain Valley Paper Company, in folding paper crafts for the public. At a separate table, OCA intern Chloe Tsang gave a hands on Chinese calligraphy demonstration, inviting others to join. In an exhibit, watercolor and pen and ink artist

Wei M. Lew displayed his beautifully colored artwork.

OCA San Mateo also displayed their banner, brochures, and newsletter, while Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc. featured numerous Asian Pacific American books from their bookstore. Participants involved include: Felicia Hoshino, a children's book illustrator and author; Oscar Penaranda, an author, poet, teacher and historian who discussed the

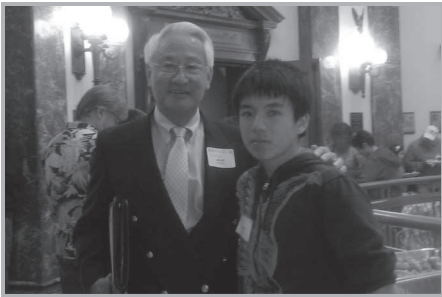
Graphic Novelist Gene Luen Yang



history of Filipinos in the Bay Area; Gene Luen Yang, Award winning graphic novelist of American-born Chinese; Thien Pham, an illustrator author who talked about his latest collaboration, *Level Up*; and Jeannie Yee Davis, author of *The Accidental Columnist* who made a special guest appearance.

The event would not have been possible without the support of Foster City Library Branch Manager Barbara Blanchard and Public Service Librarian Cynthia Rider. Their help and support made the experience pleasurable. Sponsors Borel Private Bank & Trust Company and i-five have also greatly contributed. ☐

# An Immigration Mingle



Steve Okamoto and Aaron Arima



Katharine Pong and Aaron Arima

By Kayla Chun and Katharine Pong

The Immigration Day festival was held at the San Mateo County Historical Museum in Redwood City. This free-admission event lasted much of the afternoon and captured constant crowds. In addition to introducing food from different cultures, the festival featured various performances that reflected



the diversity present in our community.

Due to the rain, however, the festivities were moved into the old county courthouse. The lower floor was full of arts and crafts and other activities for children to enjoy. The upper level held a food tasting, prepared and served by volunteer YOCA's, for an older audience. There the public paid a small fee and, in return, received a punch card, which served as a ticket to try the various foods available. A plethora of options, from Swedish and Italian to Chinese and Greek were displayed

on a series of tables set up in a beautiful rotunda. To go along with the diverse cultural foods, Thai, Irish, Hawaiian, and Filipino performances were held in the courtroom. With the full schedule

of live performances, the audience easily enjoyed themselves. Along with the all of the festive activities, the Museum's exhibits, which focused on the history of immigration in San Mateo County, were open for public viewing. Despite the weather, the festival was a success and an exciting way to acknowledge and celebrate the various cultures that surround us. ☐



Kayla Chun



Michelle Guan and Jenny Chen



(From left to right) Chloe Tsang, YOCA Treasurer Jennifer Kao, YOCA Treasurer Katharine Pong, Speak and Lead with Pride Chair Dr. David Chai, and YOCA co-President Meagan Chan

## A Young Success for YOCA

By Katherine Pong

Members of the YOCA and OCA shared an enjoyable night together to honor several special individuals and celebrate the YOCA at its first YOCA Gala.

The event was held on the evening of July 9 at YOCA Advisor Monica Yeung Arima's home. YOCA members and OCA members mingled and chatted over a variety of finger foods, such as filled cucumbers, homemade sushi, chicken and mango skewers, and prosciutto-covered honeydew. Later in the evening, YOCA member Sean Wang-Lu performed for the guests, first singing and playing guitar, then playing piano. The attendees especially enjoyed the Debussy piece he played on the piano and were impressed by his talent

and passion. After this performance, YOCA co-president Meagan Chan gave a short speech in which she recapped the YOCA's year and experiences. Following Meagan's speech, YOCA Board members Jennifer Kao and Katharine

Pong presented awards to the night's honorees. Three of the award recipients—Meagan Chan, Chloe Tsang, and Emily Lin—have recently become graduates from Mills High School and will be attending college in the fall. The fourth award recipi-

ent was OCA member David Chai, who is much beloved for his active role in OCA. YOCA honored him for his work as the leader of the OCA Speak and Lead with Pride program, as many YOCA members are former Speak and Lead participants. Since Dr. Chai also helped Speak and Lead participants obtain internships and other opportunities, YOCA is grateful to him for all he has done. With the end of the awards ceremony, the formal entertainment of the night ended, the guests returned to socializing amongst themselves, and wrapped up the night.

The excellent turnout and attendee enthusiasm allowed YOCA to dub its first Gala a success. The YOCA would like to extend its gratitude to all the OCA members who came to support the event. YOCA is excited for next year's YOCA Gala! □



(left to right) OCA Vice President Ben Yeung, Stephanie Wang, YOCA co-President Meagan Chan, YOCA Secretary Katharine Pong, Michelle Guan, Kayla Chun, Iris Choi, YOCA Advisor Monica Yeung Arima, Chloe Tsang, Aaron Arima, Mrs. Guan and Sean Lu

# OCA San Mateo Scholarship Essay

## The Power of One Voice

*By Betty Shen, San Mateo High School, Class of 2011*

Shards of glass litter the street. A pair of overturned cars frames the scene of destruction, embedded in a layer of mud that covers what is left of a concrete road. Off in the distance, refugees scavenge for wood dry enough to start a fire. The screams from these silhouettes are in foreign tongues, but it is clear that they are begging for God, Allah, Mother Nature, or just plain luck to return their families to them. As I watch the sun slip quickly below the horizon, plunging the universe into darkness, I can see, hear, feel, and taste the hopelessness in the air.

But I am not there.

I am a sixth grader twenty thousand kilometers away, and I want to change the channel. Safe in the warmth of my suburban bubble, I thought nothing of the scenes that played out on T.V. As I turned up the music to drown out my parents' murmurs about fallen telephone poles, I fell asleep to the lull of jazz. Hours later, I arose to my mother's frantic shaking.

"Wake up, wake up! Your friend's cousin is missing."

The next few days were a chaotic blur of phone calls and hysteria, followed by an all-consuming silence. Just like the force of the tsunami, death had always seemed like an unfathomable being. However, this time, it was real. During the funeral, hushed by guilt, I watched a lady hobble towards the donation stand. The clang of a metal coins rang in my ears long after the reception was over.

On the ride home, the donation can haunted my thoughts. I had never believed that a few dollars could "change a life," but in the following days, I was humbled by reports of strangers from all walks of life who fundraised for the refugees. Ours was a global world in which people, regardless of cultural or economic background, had unified to effect change. But I, who personally knew a victim, had not even tried to help. I hungered to break out of this passivity. Using art, my most accomplished skill, I created a set of tsunami paintings that I sold over the course of the year. I illustrated portraits of refugees and shattered houses, gasoline puddles and angry waves. This was my first experience with the power of art, and although the monetary amount that I donated from these paintings to relief funds was trivial, this project was an impetus for a greater change within myself. My newfound sense of compassion led me to create an organization, DesignSpeaks, to expand the potentials of visual communication. By evolving into an entrepreneur, I discovered that empathy for others was not enough—I needed to use my talent in proactive ways to improve my community. Today, my work consists of creating low-cost advertising materials for nonprofits that do not have the funds to hire a marketing team. By working with companies from San Francisco to Long Island, I have actively researched problems such as environmental pollution and homeless education in order to create effective advertisements for society.

Looking back, I am lucky that I have discovered my own weapon for activism—design. As an undergraduate, I look forward to collaborating with a diversity of innovators, technologists, and artists to implement social projects. I believe that the power of communication, limited by neither financial nor technological means, is the key to overcoming global challenges. □

# Dedication of the Immigration Heritage Wall on Angel Island

By Benjamin Yeung

On Saturday July 23, OCA San Mateo organized a trip to Angel Island to observe the dedication of the Immigration Heritage Wall. The Wall was created with the donations of over 600 individuals and over 350 immigrants are honored on 182 plaques. It is part of the campaign to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Angel Island Immigration Station. The trip originated as an idea by San Mateo Councilmember David Lim, whose father came through the immigration station on his arrival to the United States back in 1924. Board member and YOCA chair Monica Arima organized a group of high school students to join David and his family on their trip as an educational experience. Dr. Kenneth Fong of Kenson Ventures donated the necessary funds.

## Immigration Heritage Wall



*Dedication Ceremony*

On the day of dedication, 11 students from Westmoor High and Carlmont High boarded the ferry to Angel Island, accompanied by David Lim and family, board member David Chai and Vice President Ben Yeung. After arriving on the island, the group joined hundreds of visitors on the lawn just below the immigration station barracks. The ceremony included speeches by Congresswoman Lynn Woosley, President of the Angel Island SF Board of Directors Buck Gee and other dignitaries. Angel Island descendants also provided moving accounts of their family history. The barracks were then opened to the public and free entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon. In addition to having

a nice outing, everyone had a valuable lesson on immigration history. ☐

## Kayla Chun and Michelle Guan



*The Westmoor Bunch*



## Three Strong Ends And...

Ray Yang



As the technology intern of the Organization of Chinese Americans, my responsibilities involved spreading community events and flyers on social networks, attending

board meetings, and providing suggestions for upcoming activities and projects. Unfortunately, I did not have a handful of time to fully participate in the organization this year, but I am really thankful for the opportunity to be further involved with my community through the meetings. From understanding nothing about OCA to actively associating with the San Mateo Chapter, I realized that OCA insists the idea of teamwork and collaborating with each other as well as the society. The members efficiently cooperated with each other and came up with the most effective solutions for many problems. Most importantly, I am really proud to be an intern of OCA not only because I learned much significant news of the Asian American community, but also learned the skills to contribute for an organization, for my community, and even for all Asian Americans. I am looking forward to provide my technical support for OCA and am more than happy to gain a hands-on experience working with and for people in the future. □

Chloe Tsang



As OCA's Publications Intern, I had the opportunity in directly voicing the aspirations of the Asian Pacific community. Through

participating in and writing about events, I have not only come to appreciate the communion among people with similar traditions, cultures, and heritage, but also become a part of this collective effort in addressing the overarching needs of all citizens. Whether it was simply helping out at an event or putting together stories, knowing that my work had some significance in this joint endeavor has been extremely rewarding.

Working with such caring people has likewise been enjoyable. Together, we have created several newsletters that focus on volunteer work from promoting Asian Pacific outreach to contributing to the less fortunate in the world. In designing a potentially new website, I have also closely worked with members in creating a way that would further promote our cause. The technical and collaborative skills in addition to personal relations that I have developed are all a part of my invaluable experience here as an intern. Overall, it has simply been: amazing. Thank you very much for this opportunity. I truly hope to continue contributing in any way possible. □

Emily Lin



As a Publications and Public Relations Intern at OCA for over two years, I was responsible for writing newsletters articles, taking

pictures and designing flyers. I also attended and volunteered at OCA-sponsored events throughout the year. As an immigrant three years ago, I regarded OCA as my second family in this unfamiliar country. Like most of the new immigrants, I was afraid of speaking English because people always laughed at my Chinese accent. However, I was fortunate enough to participate in Speak and Lead With Pride, a Public Speaking and Leadership program held by the OCA San Mateo Chapter. The program helped me become more confident about expressing my opinions and speaking in front of many people. I also received much help from OCA members to produce a quality, final product. Working with the Chapter and the board members has not only given me much communication, management and leadership skills, but also given me valuable opportunities to help people. By working directly with community people, I see how the food we provide, the visits and special events we arrange for them can bring so much laughter and strength. I found my worth in this new country by helping people from different backgrounds. I hope to continue to help OCA and to bring this American treasure of diversity to China in the future. □

## ... Three Fresh Beginnings



*Ashley Kwak*  
*Public Relations*  
*Intern*

My name is Ashley Kwak and I am currently a senior at Mills High School. I was born and have lived in the Bay Area all of my life. I am interested in Biology and English and I enjoy working with others and doing volunteer work. I currently am a member of the Millbrae Leos Club.

I am honored to be able to serve as the Public Relations intern. Although I have not had any previous experience in working with the OCA, I have helped organize local events and worked with Asian issues through the Millbrae Leos Club. The Millbrae Leos gave me the opportunity to help the Jade Ribbon Youth Council raise awareness in Asian and Pacific Islander about HBV.

While working with the OCA, I hope to be able to help out more in the community and to gain experience working with different organizations. I also hope to be able to learn more about Asian and other local issues while building my communication and cooperation skills. I am glad for this opportunity and will do my best to fulfill my duties during my time as the Public Relations intern. ☐



*Richard Wong*  
*Technology Intern*

Throughout my childhood I lived in a small town called Hercules, a city an hour drive north of San Francisco. I attended elementary and middle school at Notre Dame Des Victoire School, where the environment was not highly populated by Chinese. However, every day after school, in order to get to my dad's pharmacy, I had to pass by Chinatown. As I made this daily routine year after year, I was able to catch a glimpse of my own culture while I grew up.

Being a "city kid" was not easy. I began my high school experience at Mills High feeling out of place because I did not know anyone. Soon enough, however, I was able to develop friendships through activities and clubs such as the Swim Team, Dragon Team and Millbrae Leos Club. Academically, I found that my favorite class subjects are Chemistry, Biology and art. Because of my interest in these sciences, I am motivated to pursue a career in the medical field. On the other hand, art acts as a form of communication in which I could express myself. I especially enjoy painting pastel, charcoal, Gong Bi and sketches. In spite of my various interests, by interning with the OCA, I hope to gain a better understanding of my culture and to develop my leadership capabilities. ☐



*Sean Lu*  
*Publications Intern*

I was born and raised in California under the guidance of my father, Frank, and mother, Rene, both first generation immigrants from China. I am currently a senior at Carmont High School while heading a music for the elderly community service group called Bay Area Young Artists Community. Although I maintain focus on my studies in school, I also study piano at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under Dr. William Wellborn. This coming school year, my schedule includes classes such as AP Physics, AP Gov, AP Econ, AP Literature, AP Comparative, and Multivariable Calculus. I will be applying to schools such as Harvard, Princeton, and Cornell. ☐



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