



President's Message Summer 2019 SMOCA Newsletter

Hi everyone. I'd like to fill you in on some of our recent events and what's to come in the near future.

Edward Liang, one of our young OCA members, attended the OCA/JACL leadership summit in Washington DC in April. The summit held workshops on lobbying, teambuilding, and APIA issues. He met some very influential people while visiting DC and had lots of fun meeting other young professionals from across the nation.

Congratulations to the graduating Peninsula high school seniors! We had our Annual Scholarship Luncheon in May, awarding 10 scholarships for financial need, academic excellence, and community service. Proud parents, family, siblings, and friends attended the Luncheon to hear the graduates' plan for what's next.

For the first time, OCA San Mateo offered an interview workshop for the students and young professionals led by Jennifer Kaminsky, an OCA San Mateo member, and Lori Lam, a professional recruiter. The well-attended workshop was held at the San Mateo Main Library and attended by participants coming from our Speak & Lead group, Mills High School, and a few students who walked in because they saw our sign advertising the workshop. Having 15 students for our very first workshop is quite a turnout. We even had inquiries for future workshops.

Our next event will be the B3 Leadership Summit scheduled for this fall. The B3 Leadership Summit is aimed toward the youth and young professionals looking for guidance and mentorship on their journey through college and into their young careers. Please be on the lookout for this announcement.

We'll keep you posted on the details of our events and we are happy to welcome new members, thank you to our Board, volunteers and faithful members.

Chris Bush

OCA Lunar Year Dinner

By: Carrie Ho

On March 16, 2019, OCA San Mateo Chapter held a Lunar Year Dinner at the Grand Palace Seafood Restaurant in South San Francisco to celebrate the New Year: The Year of the Pig. The event was open to all OCA members and guests to join the celebration. Before the meal was served, our Chapter President, Chris Bush, started off the dinner with a few words. According to popular saying, those born in the year of the pig may not stand out in a crowd, but they are very realistic. Though not wasteful spenders, they will let themselves enjoy life. They love entertainment and will occasionally treat themselves. They are energetic and are always enthusiastic, even for boring jobs.

An abundance and a variety of dishes were served, including Peking duck, black pepper steak cubes, and Reishi mushrooms over mustard greens. Many of the guests enjoyed the authentic Chinese dishes. In addition, guests were given numbered tickets for a chance to win prizes such as a Bluetooth speaker and a variety of wines. Special guests included Millbrae Mayor Wayne Lee, and Ron Hsiao of the San Mateo County Office of Education. Chris Bush also announced upcoming events and goals for the new year, and reflected on successful events throughout the year, including the Chapter's Speak and Lead with Pride Program. The Speak and Lead Program is a hands-on course designed to teach the art of public speaking and leadership skills to high school students. The course recently concluded their recognition ceremony and speech contest with a \$500 cash prize.

OCA also led a successful seminar this past September at the University of California Berkeley, educating young Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) professionals interested in taking their personal and professional goals to the next level through leadership development and networking. This program provided relevant professional development, peer networking, and mentoring to aspiring AAPI professionals. Build, Breakthrough, Believe is the three-word mantra of the B3 program and the words are used as building blocks for the event agenda.

The dinner closed with a traditional Chinese New Year dessert, sesame balls. The guests left with smiles as they wished each other a prosperous career and a Happy Chinese New Year.



Speak and Lead

By Carrie Ho

OCA San Mateo hosted its annual Speak and Lead with Pride program from February through March. Speak and Lead with Pride is an annual program hosted by OCA San Mateo to strengthen high school students' public speaking abilities. This is a hands-on course designed to teach the art of public speaking and leadership skills to high school students. Over the course of 6 weeks, participants will gain remarkable confidence in their public speaking and leadership abilities. The course concludes with a recognition ceremony and speech contest for a \$500 cash prize.

Public Speaking is always a necessity in the classroom and in the workforce. It allows us to form connections, influence decisions, and motivate change. Public speaking is one of the most important and useful forms of communication and therefore, OCA decided to implement this annual program to train the next generation of leaders.

Many high school students were excited to be a part of the Speak and Lead program and they learned how to be more confident and comfortable giving speeches in front of large audiences.

The Speak & Lead with Pride program looks for Asian Pacific Islander American high school students who want to develop their oral communication skills and learn how to speak in a public setting. Students must commit to attending all 6 workshops, participate in all class lectures and activities, and be prepared by reading the required sections of text, submitting a completed outline of the speech, and giving the speech during the designated time slot.

The Speak & Lead with Pride program has guest speakers, judges, and volunteers who have background in public speaking, communication, leadership, and advocacy experiences. Anyone who specializes in any of those areas and has interest in public speaking is welcome to participate.



Reclaiming your Heritage

By: Lilian Chang

How much does your heritage impact you? What does language, culture, and history mean to you? Every year the OCA San Mateo Chapter Interns are given the task of interviewing an influential Asian Pacific American figure in our community. In the past years, interns have interviewed prominent members in the community, such as, SMFC School District Board of Trustees Member Audrey Ng and ABC7 News Reporter David Louie. This year, the OCA would like to recognize the work of Lian Guow, the founder and owner of Dalang Publishing, the author of *Only a Girl*. We met inside her San Mateo home on a Saturday morning. At first glance, Lian seems to be an ordinary woman, but once she opens her mouth, she becomes a lively, emotional, and entertaining personality. What is more intriguing is the story she has to tell.

At a young age, Lian developed a love for writing and reading. She later published her own book, *Only a Girl* in 2009. Her book explored family dynamics in a Chinese-Indonesian household between three generations of women. However, what was originally meant to be a fictional novel about the universality of women's roles in families, soon became acknowledged as a historical fictional novel. It was brought to her attention that her book dealt with historical events that impacted the characters' lives, including the turbulent times of WWII and the Indonesian Revolution. Not long afterwards, the book was also embraced in Indonesia as it helped to explain why there was so much friction between Chinese-Indonesians and indigenous Indonesians. As a result, her readers began to write to her about helping them understand their parents better in the Chinese-Indonesian community. Her book also heightened the interest in Indonesian culture and history in the western world. Yet, perhaps she felt the weight of her own book the most. Lian explained that she felt awakened by the impact of her book. To fully understand the difference she was making, she had to take inventory of her emotions and retouch her roots.

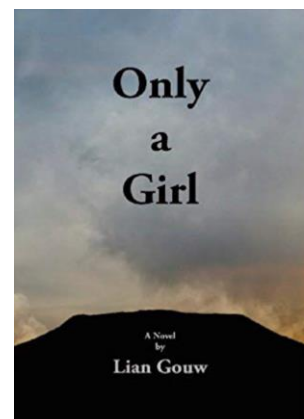
Lian was born in Bandung, a mountain city in Indonesia. Her Chinese-Indonesian background in a Dutch colonized country made her experience division and westernization at an early age. Growing up, she attended all-Dutch schools, and was required to learn Dutch, English, French, and German. She adds, "We were required to read 10 books in each language." What she was not taught, however, was her native language.

She reflects that as a teenager, she did not see the importance of heritage or understand what colonization had taken away from her. Now, years later, she speaks strongly, "We were not allowed. We weren't taught our native language." She urges us to understand, "That is colonialism, and that is something you guys as a young generation, need to stand still and think back about, because that's your heritage.....You were lucky to be born in a different situation."

Her life continued to be encompassed by westernization, as she assimilated to the United States in the 60's. Here, she learned English, and became fluent, writing *Only a Girl* in English rather than Dutch. Still, it wasn't until 2011, after being deprived for so long, a few years after the release of *Only a Girl*, when she began to actively learn Indonesian. She regrets not being able to embrace her heritage sooner, but she has made it her business to gain back what had been taken from her. In three years' time, she became fluent in Indonesian. Her own difficulty in discovering her roots has given rise to her activism, "I'm an activist for retaining your heritage. That you are aware, that you appreciate, and have some kind of notion of giving back."

In an effort to renew her connection with her roots, Lian went to Indonesia in 2010 for the first time since her emigration to the United States. There, she became inspired by the amount of English books in Indonesia, and decided to do the same by bringing Indonesian books to the Western World. Following her trip she founded her own company, Dalang Publishing, based in San Mateo, with the sole purpose of bringing quality Indonesian stories to more people, hoping that it may help them better understand their roots. To achieve this goal, over the years she has worked with translators to complete a total of 10 titles, including *Kei*, *Dasamuka*, and *Love, Death and Revolution*. Each of these titles are available at Barnes & Nobles, Amazon, and on the Dalang Publishing home page. Aside from her work as a publisher, she and her team have been engaging with the community, sharing Indonesian culture and history. Most recently, she participated in Cal Day and hosted an event at the Burlingame Library.

To her, being Chinese-Indonesian is not just a name or a title that she carelessly throws around; it's her heritage. Behind this "name" is a language, a culture, history, and a country. And for those who may struggle to find their own identity, Lian advises to, "Go home and experience what is there, not with a critical eye, but as someone who wants to be part of the culture." The next time you introduce yourself as a Chinese American or as an American, stop and think about what it means to you. What bearing does it have on your life? In a generation full of distractions and materialism, we should all learn from Lian and pursue self-discovery in the form of reconnecting with our roots.



Interview Workshop

By Carrie Ho

OCA San Mateo Chapter was proud to host its first youth interview workshop on July 13 at the San Mateo public library. This type of workshop has never been done before in our OCA chapter and we were excited to host our first one for high school students. Students from all over the San Mateo County were enthusiastic about attending and learned a lot about interview techniques and correct dress code.

Interview techniques are crucial to landing an internship or a job. However, many high school students are not taught the skills necessary to succeed in an interview. Interviews allow employers to understand more about our personalities and determine whether or not we are good fits for the jobs at hand. Therefore, we decided to host an interview workshop for the youth who had not been familiar with this type of setting.

Students practiced with their partners by doing elevator exercises where they interviewed for job positions and had to explain why they were the perfect fit for the job. Furthermore, students were given a crash course on how to dress up during an interview and were given examples on business casual attire.

More topics such as posture, etiquette, and formalities were covered during the workshop. The students were thrilled to be learning these techniques and skills that they could use for a lifetime. Thank you to all the volunteers who took part in hosting the event and the students for attending!



Meet the Interns:

Lilian Chang



Lilian is one of the two Interns, alongside Carrie, servicing the OCA San Mateo Chapter for the 2018-2019 year. She is an incoming junior at Mills High School who enjoys competitive speech and debate. She has competed in Lincoln Douglas format debate for two years and also her school's mock trial team. Additionally, she has also advanced to the district level in the 2018-2019 Lions Club Student Speaker Competition.

Aside from being involved with the OCA, since 2018, Lilian has been appointed as a San Mateo County Youth Commissioner. She and other commissioners from all over San Mateo County serve as an advisory board for the Board of Supervisors. As a legislative body, they aim to represent the interests of youth and create community based approaches to help solve issues. This year, Lilian has served as the co-vice president of the Immigrant Youth Committee, where they have helped introduce an Indigenous People's Day ordinance in place of Columbus Day to celebrate the history of Native Americans and their role in shaping the country. Her committee has also tackled the problem of affordable housing and created a scholarship for Immigrant Youth.

Lilian has continued her activism through the founding of her own green club at school. She helped to lead the initiative at her school to demand a better recycling and composting system by advocating for compost bins and promoting zero waste through campaign videos, signage, and spirit events. She has been recognized by the San Mateo County Office of Education as an OPSC 2018-2019 Student Leader.

She is passionate about environmental issues, women's rights, education, and gun control. In the past she has participated in walk outs and strikes in support of these causes. Lilian is hoping to continue her advocacy by pursuing a career in law or politics.

In her free time, Lilian enjoys spending time with her two dogs, reading, and exercise.

Meet the Interns:

Carrie Ho



Carrie is one of the interns, alongside Lilian, and currently serves the OCA San Mateo Chapter for the 2018-2019 year. She is also an upcoming junior at Mills High School who enjoys swimming and playing the piano. Her favorite stroke is backstroke and her favorite event is the 200 individual medley. She swims on the Mills High School girls' varsity team and hopes to continue swimming in college.

At school, Carrie is involved in FCCLA, which stands for Family, Career, Community Leaders of America. As of February 2019, she was elected to serve as their Region 5 Vice President. As a member of the student-led organization, she hosted meetings and workshops to encourage students to become leaders through public speaking, communication, and teamwork skills. She has also competed in FCCLA competitions such as sports nutrition her freshman year and entrepreneurship her sophomore year and was able to represent Mills and advance to the state level. Carrie is a member of Model United Nations at her school. She is currently the Secretary and Treasurer of the club and has represented Mills at the Berkeley Model UN and the Stanford Model UN.

Carrie has also been appointed as a San Mateo County Youth Commissioner as of 2018. She was able to be a part of the Education and Economic Development Committee and organize a Social Host Ordinance Town Hall to heighten awareness and responsibility for underage drinking that places children as well as our public safety in jeopardy. She worked with her committee to inform people that the new rules will hold both juveniles and host adults accountable.

She also has a passion for music. Carrie graduated from level 9 in piano last spring and has been working on concert pieces for her level 10 graduation. She loves to play music from the romantic era and her favorite composer is Chopin. She also qualified as a finalist in the MTAC Piano Festival in 2017.

In her free time, Carrie enjoys watching television shows, eating, and going shopping.