

Current



“I don’t see us as heroes, like Superman or Wonder Woman, who are saving lives. We’re like life-jackets or compasses; we help rescue and guide victims.”

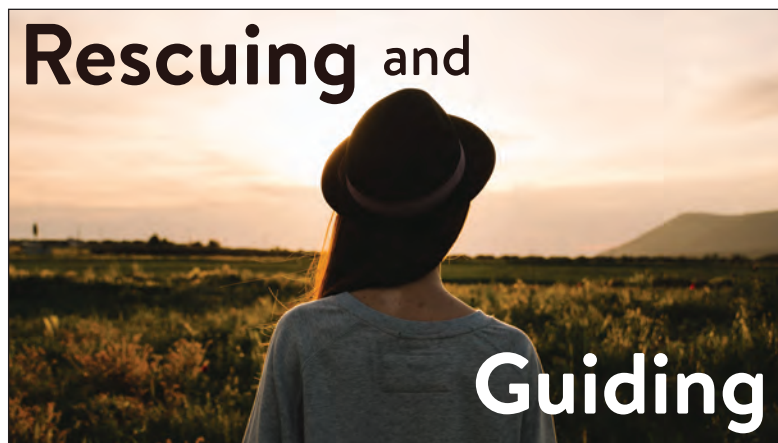
Quiet and reflective, Yulanda Kwong, Director of our Social Services Ministry, explains what drew her to Cameron House, the history of our Domestic Violence Program, and the crucial need we fill in San Francisco’s Chinatown.

Initially, Yulanda wanted to become an Elementary School Teacher. While studying at U.C. Berkeley, her research was on the subject of “The Effectiveness of After-School Programs.” This fieldwork led her to volunteer in our Bilingual Afterschool Program (BAP) where she saw the many factors and relationship dynamics that affect a child’s mental, emotional, and academic development. Wondering how she could help youth grow and develop healthy social and communication skills, she realized her life’s calling: working with the people who have the greatest impact on children: their parents and grandparents.

Since that time, she’s been on an amazing journey, bridging the cultures of the East and West, of the mind and heart. Reaching out to immigrant women and children suffering from

domestic violence, she and her team walk *with* them, facing these challenges together, discovering what works best for them, what strengthens them, and what helps them move forward. And they have been doing this for decades.

“Our Domestic Violence (DV) Program ‘officially’ started in the 80’s,” she explains, “but it has been a part of



Cameron House since its beginnings.” Credited with rescuing thousands of Chinese girls from the “Yellow Slave Trade,” Donaldina Cameron helped anyone needing assistance. Thus, even late at night, women would knock on our doors seeking refuge from spousal or family conflicts. They knew that Donaldina would give them comfort, guidance, and support; and she never failed them.

Over a century later, women still come to our doors seeking support. Their clothing has changed, but their challenges have not. As new immigrants, they continue to face hurdles that can seem insurmountable: finding housing and jobs, adapting to

a new culture and language, trying to discover the resources that will help them adjust quickly and become strong citizens. Frequently, in the case of families, both parents are forced to work several jobs in order to afford the exorbitant cost of living in San Francisco, and their new jobs are rarely equal to the ones they had in their homeland. Many live in SROs (single-room occupancy units) the size of a jail cell - if they are lucky, their room is not located in the middle of a floor where natural light is unobtainable - and they share a common kitchen and bathroom with everyone on their floor.* They struggle with finances, with helping their children academically, and with family relationships.

Oftentimes, these difficulties create a ‘perfect storm’ for addictions and/or domestic violence.

The children in these domestic violence situations struggle with yet another layer of adjustment issues: isolation, self-blame, their own challenge of learning a new culture and language, and the inability of their parents to help them. “I have heard of children cutting themselves or wanting to commit suicide because they are not happy about themselves or the people around them,” says Yulanda. Cameron House’s Youth Ministries Programs certainly address many of these needs, providing a safe environment, positive influence,

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May's Corner

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month, and there is nothing more important than the work we do in the area of DV. In many cases, our Social Services Ministry staff is literally helping to save lives.

Recently I had the benefit of a successful right-hip replacement surgery. As I recover, I am blessed with prayers from the Cameron House community and appreciate everyone supporting my taking the time to heal.

One night as I lay in bed (insomnia and hot flashes are common in female patients of a certain age), I suddenly recalled some of my own experiences with DV. My father was a restaurant worker, and usually returned home late at night. Sometimes in his fits of anger, he repeatedly beat my mother, who would run into our bedroom. My younger sisters and I laid in our beds, frozen in terror, pretending to be asleep. After they left, we would whisper, "Are you awake?" "Yes." We were scared, ashamed, and didn't know what to do. I was 12 years old and my sisters were six and four. We felt powerless. As children, we lacked the strength and courage to intervene and didn't know that this was DV.

This was the kind of violence that children should never have to bear witness to. This was the kind of violence that a loved one should never have to experience. This violence left emotional scars on us and physical ones on my mother's body.

Unfortunately, we didn't have access to programs like the ones at Cameron House. I know that my mother's life - and ours - would have

been much healthier and happier had we experienced the compassion, assistance, and resources our clients receive. We actively talk to our kids and their families to find out how things are going at home, and offer resources and support when their situations become physically and/or emotionally challenging.

As I lay in bed that night, my mind drifted to CH alumni and the current children in our Youth Programs. I wondered how many of them have witnessed this kind of violence and how many continue to endure this kind of behavior from the adults in their lives.

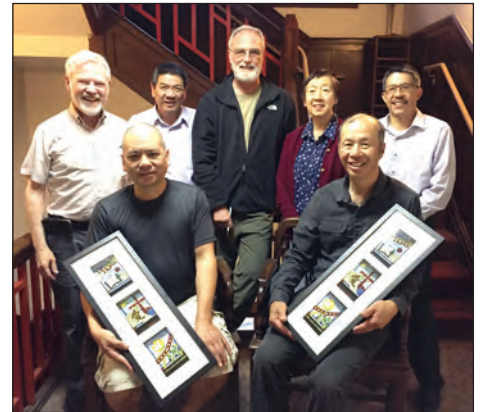
I am happy to say that while I grew up with DV, my generation of siblings has been able to break out of this cycle. We are neither abusers nor married to abusive spouses.

Regrettably, this is not the case for everyone. Children from abusive homes frequently carry that violence into their adult relationships, becoming either batterers or victims. The cycle of violence continues from one generation to the next and spills over into our schools and neighborhoods.

DV is more than a statistic. It is a devastating situation affecting people of all income and education levels, racial groups, sexual orientations, and social circles. It is, however, something that can be addressed, stopped, and - with legislation, education, awareness, resources, and intervention - something that can be prevented, but only when we do this together, as a community.

And speaking of a supportive community, we would like to thank

Richard Chew and Jon Yip for six years of serving on the Cameron House Foundation Board. Their stewardship and direction have helped to grow our



(l to r): Seated, Jon Yip and Richard Chew. Standing, David K. Miller, Aaron Jung, Bruce DermLeod, Cynthia Joe, and Craig Lee.

endowment fund. We are also happy to welcome to the CHF Board, Beverly B. Yip, a former CH Board Member and talented business owner. Bev knows everyone; she connected us with Bloomingdales, which is doing a special fundraiser for CH on Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015.

Giving back to the community never goes out of style. Join us for a charity shopping event in support of a great cause. 10% of tracked sales will be donated to CAMERON HOUSE on Oct. 3rd. At the sales register, ask for a duplicate receipt and drop it off at any one of our five CH volunteer tables to make your donation count!

We'll have a table on each floor, so stop by and we'll tell you all about the day's promotions. All money raised from this special event will help to fund our Youth and Social Services programs and help to break the cycle of DV.

Where Are They Now?

So many of our Alumni are ‘going places’ – literally and figuratively – and many of them are making a tremendous impact on the world around them. We had the opportunity of catching up with one such Alumna, Jeanee (Quan) Linden to learn more about the Linden Centre, located in the Yunnan Province of China. Enchanting in its beauty and history, the Linden Centre is a unique blend of museum, home, educational center, and time machine. The elegant heritage site is filled with traditional Chinese art and rare artifacts. As guests enter the stunning, stone-carved courtyard, they step back into antiquity and discover ancient China with all its ethnic and cultural richness.

Can you describe your Cameron House involvement?

I think I was part of Cameron House when I was still in the womb! My parents went to CH when they were teenagers. When I was growing up, through them, I saw that a life lived by doing something bigger than myself was a good thing, and CH was the place to learn those lessons for me. I have wonderful memories of the times I spent in Day Camp, Club, and all the opportunities I was given through this special place.

How did your time at Cameron House influence your life choices and how has it helped you accomplish your goals?

I saw a lot of people at Cameron House dedicate much time and energy towards trying to make people’s lives happier. One of my goals in life was to do work that would make me happy, yet would allow me to constantly learn and grow. Living in China and running the Linden Centre means that I am constantly challenged and am forced to go outside my own comfort zone.

What is special about Cameron House?

The building itself is very special, I used to love sitting on the front porch talking with my friends, eating snacks, and waiting for my parents to pick me up. I loved running my hands over the



The Linden Family: Bryce, Jeanee, Shane and Brian

bricks that had been glazed from the 1906 earthquake and the subsequent fire. Cameron House serves as a beacon for those who dream to improve their lives and perhaps to do something good in the world.

How would you describe the Linden Centre briefly to someone who has never heard of it?

Starting the Linden Centre became a reality because my husband, Brian, and I wanted to create a place that would combine our love of culture, travel, and education. It’s a place that aspires to be more than just a hotel. It’s a center for the exchange of culture, ideas, and creativity; a special place where you go to intimately interact with the local culture.

What has surprised you in creating and managing the Linden Centre?

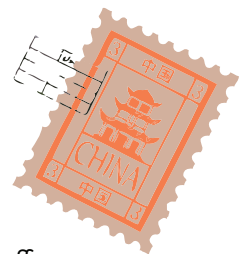
That some of the things I learned at Cameron House are applicable to

running a company, i.e., lead by example, treat people the way you want to be treated, keep a positive attitude. I am surprised that I like being the leader of a big team; I get a lot of pleasure working with my staff towards a common goal.

What are some of the main differences of living in China, compared to living in the Bay Area?

We live in the hotel, so getting time to be on our own can be difficult. In a way, our life is there for everyone to see, so we have learned to balance the needs of a private and public life. For sure, the internet access is a lot better in the Bay Area!

Through their Linden Centre and the cultural programs they offer, Jeanee and Brian give their guests the opportunity of experiencing authentic China: their Yunnan Province Centre was listed as one of the destinations in the popular book *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*. In their valuable preservation of the past - breathed into present sights, sounds, and encounters - the Lindens are ensuring that the deep roots of China will stretch out around the globe.



Going



Our youth and young adults were on the move this summer. From building homes in New Orleans to restoring trails on Ghost Ranch, they spent their time helping others, making new friends, and creating life-long memories.



Ft. Bragg Mini-Caravan team members: (L to R): Allan Tan, Jared Lue, and James Creed.



Hey there,
 Fort Bragg is totally different than I expected. In San Francisco, no one talks to each other when they pass on the street. In Fort Bragg, the community and people were so friendly, open, and welcoming. I volunteered with the Food Bank and at a soup kitchen, and helped lead songs for the kids at Camp Discovery. Pastor Dan and his family, Auntie Mary Sue, and everyone was so friendly and open.

Everyone should go on a Mission or Commission trip. They should go with an open mind, no expectations, and enjoy it for what it is. I promise them, they'll enjoy it.
 see ya soon,
 Jared

Hi all,
 My favorite part of this trip is just being able to leave my phone in my duffel and not use it much. This allows me to get to know the people I'm with and appreciate the work we are doing in a beautiful, natural environment. I've tried horse-back riding for the first time! I'm learning that there are many things I can do by myself, but

there are also a lot of things I can only do with a team like my commission. Miss you, James

Our Ghost Ranch Chance Commission Team members included: Steven Cai, Matt Chen, Robert Hee, Ken Huang, James Lee, Wayland Lee, Jared Lue, and Brandon Por.
 Chaperones: Laurene Chan, Allan Tan, and Gordon Yu.



Places



Our Heidelberg Basketball Team members included: Gabriela (Gaby) Anaya, Zhita Chisholm, Sonia Hoey, Samantha Hum, Justina Jew, Kiana Johe, Juliana Mak, Hadiya Smith, Kelly Wang, and Carly Xie. Chaperones: Derrick Cheuk and Meghan Louie.

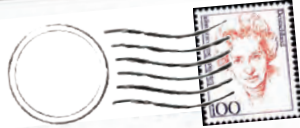


Dear Mom and Dad,

This trip to Germany is just what I wanted! I'm getting out of my comfort zone and having fun.

The food here is really, really, really good! And people are really nice. Everyone welcomes you with a warm smile and they would do anything they can to help you. The cities and houses look like they're from a movie. It's so beautiful and calming.

I now understand how my friends who don't speak Spanish feel when they come to our house and meet Grandma. I had the



privilege of meeting my exchange partners' grandparents and I couldn't understand anything they said, but they gave me a lot of treats. :D

This exchange is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, everyone should do this, even if they don't know anything about basketball. They'll learn. It's all part of the experience. DO IT. JUST DO IT!

Wish you were here, Gaby



better has been priceless.

Everyone should go on a mission trip. It doesn't have to be in New Orleans, either. It's a great experience! You can't duplicate the experience or the bonds you build by going away to help another community.

Take care, AJ



Hi everyone!

I'm having so much fun in New Orleans. We gather around the table in the library every night and laugh until my stomach hurts.

We all mesh so well, even with a lot of us being in different parts of our lives. I've learned that you can sweat forever! Also that I've been able to meet and make connections with others pretty easily. I've made some great friends out here! Meeting and getting to know everyone

New Orleans Young Adult Mission Trip members included: Chris Cheuk, Casey Chow, Josh Chuck, Jordan Del Rosario, Kristine Huey, Martin Ko, Susan Lai, Lydia Wong, Tabi Wong, Edwin Yan, Kelley Yee, and AJ Yip.

Westminster Woods

Over 80 youth - from middle-schoolers to high-schoolers - learned to walk a different pace this year at Westminster Woods. The theme, "Building Empathy: Walk a Mile in My Shoes," emphasized the values that comprise the very fibers of Cameron House. Through the Daily Themes (Awareness of Others, Communication with Others, Compassion for Others, and Faith in Action) many poignant stories were shared and new ways of perceiving were discovered. But we'll let the youth tell you themselves...



"I learned that my Cameron House family members are the ones who I love the most. They are the ones who I can go back to, and I'm happy to call them my family."



"The things I learned include showing empathy and being compassionate to others, and that in order to understand someone's situation, you have to ask for their story."

"I enjoyed the time I had with all of the new and old friends at West without having technology interfere. I learned now to play many new activities, as well, and have gotten closer to God."

"I have been able to learn so much about the world and myself here."



"What I learned at West are the different stages of empathy, and that many people from Cameron House have gone through some tough times. Understanding what they've been through has definitely broadened my mind - that we're all pretty similar - and it's brought us closer as a community."



"West is the best week of the summer."

and vital interpersonal skills - something these youth would not receive elsewhere. Since becoming Director of Social Services in 2003, Yulanda has ensured that one of her Counselors works regularly with BAP students and provides consultation and counseling to students and their families when needed.

“Parents dealing with their own domestic violence traumas may not know how to work with their children around these issues,” Yulanda states. “The difficulties of marital strife, abuse, and divorce are very personal. In Chinese culture, domestic violence is an issue that is not discussed outside of the home. Problems at home are not shared with others because it is ‘shameful’ and they don’t want to lose face. These family problems are dealt with behind closed doors.”

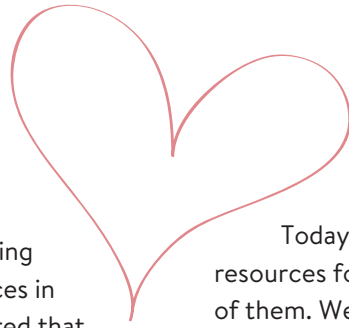
But the tide is beginning to change. Back in the 1980s and 90s, most of the people seeking assistance from domestic violence situations spoke Cantonese and Toishanese; today, more speak Mandarin. Thirty-five years ago, women tried to endure it; they stayed - and suffered - in violent relationships much longer before seeking aid. Now, women might be in an abusive relationship only one or two years before they come to see us. Where women had less awareness about domestic violence 35 years ago, they now have much more knowledge about the subject - even women who have been in America for a short period of time know they have resources and rights. In the past there were Chinese cultural values that created a barrier to discussing these issues; women today

are more comfortable sharing their experiences.

Today there are also more resources for women, and we’re one of them. We offer Counseling, ESL and computer classes, Women’s and Cancer support groups, Food Pantry, Parent-Child Workshops, and Domestic Violence prevention and intervention. Our Case Managers talk to each woman, assessing her situation; offering emotional support, resources, and referrals; creating a safety plan for her and her children; and accompanying her to every resource that will ensure her safety: the police, attorneys, family court proceedings, or the Immigration Bureau.

Not only is our accompaniment service entirely unique, we are the only agency in San Francisco that provides holistic and comprehensive services to monolingual, Asian-speaking women. Members of our staff speak English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Toishanese, and Vietnamese; so we can look each woman in the face and speak to her compassionately in her native language.

Many of the women and children who come to us and receive our domestic violence services, tell us that Cameron House is their second home. Frequently, they - and their children - volunteer in our programs to contribute back to our community. ‘Rescuing and guiding victims’ is what Cameron House has always done. Whether in 1874 or 2015, when clients come for our services, they don’t enter a large, impersonal institution; they walk into an inviting and safe home. Donaldina wouldn’t have it any other way.



In June, Cameron House staff Karen Chu and Ming Quan Chang, Case Managers, and Yulanda Kwong, Social Services Ministry Director, were part of the International Social Work and Violence Prevention Conference, hosted by California State University, East Bay Department of Social Work, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Asians Against Violence, and Chinese Community Health Resource Center. Our staff worked together, facilitating a session on “How Domestic Violence Has Impacted Chinese Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area Since the 1980s.”

The national and state-wide statistics they provided are staggering: One in every four women experience domestic violence in their lifetime. And each year, an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner. Unfortunately, most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police.¹ Yet, according to the California Department of Justice, there were 174,649 domestic violence-related calls for assistance in 2007. Of these calls, 40% involved the use of weapons.²

At Cameron House, 39% of our counseling clients are seeking assistance from domestic-violence situations. Of that 39%, 14% are children and 82% are adults. For *all* of them, we are a life-support, a guide, at every step of their journey.

1 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence 2012
2 California Partnership to Ending Domestic Violence 2012

* *Life Inside SF'S Vanishing Single Resident Occupancies* (www.thebolditalic.com)



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upcoming events

- Oct. 3** 10 am - 9 pm Bloomingdale's *Shopping Works Wonders*, in support of Cameron House, Bloomingdale's Store at 845 Market Street, San Francisco
For more information, see *May's Corner*
- Oct. 23** 7 pm - 9 pm Book Signing and Q&A with Gordon Chin in Culbertson
- Nov. 27** 9 am - Noon Alumni Basketball "Open Run" in Cameron House Main Yard
1 pm - 4 pm Alumni Coffeehouse in Culbertson
8 pm - Midnight CHYA Night Out: A Young Adult Social (21+, Location TBA)

Helping Families

Do you want a better relationship with your child? Our Interactive Parent-Child Workshops for Cantonese-Speaking families will be held on Saturdays, Sept. 26 - Nov. 21 from 1:00 - 3:45 pm. Positive communications is only one of the subjects we'll be addressing, along with hands-on practice! There is a \$10 fee for materials. For more info, please contact Lisa Chow at lisa@cameronhouse.org or 415-781-0401 x212.

Helping a Good Cause

Are you sitting on air miles that can get two people to Paris or New York? Would you like to share your vacation home; sports or opera tickets? Are you an art or dance teacher who can teach a small group? Are unused gifts filling up your closet?

Help us by donating new or antique items for our 2016 Gala and Carnival. This year's Auction Chair is Charlene Jung. If you have something to donate, please contact Mary Peterson at maryp@cameronhouse.org or 415-781-0401 x144. Thank you!