

# Current



## A Light Shining in the Darkness

The two of us sat on oversized chairs next to a round coffee table, a large red photo album and a small white candle positioned in the center. Sunlight was streaming through the windows, filling the room with a warm glow. The woman in front of me exuded peacefulness, confidence, and even amidst the challenges she's facing, joy. "He took his first call in the Watts district of L.A.," she said, opening the red photo album and showing me a picture of a young Asian man. "It was at a time when things were changing from the white neighborhood to a black one; so, as he used to joke, they thought that an Asian would be a nice common denominator."

The man in the photo was smiling. Clean cut, wearing a white shirt and black pants, his grin belied the incredible amount of pain and trauma he had already experienced in his life. This was not just the snapshot of a youthful Willie, it was a moment captured at the beginning of his mission – a mission that would continue until his last breath: reaching out to the disenfranchised, empowering them, and trying to find his own healing.

"Bill's Chinese name is Chong," Carol said, "but the English name on his Birth Certificate – because you had to have an English name – was Willie." While down in L.A., Willie was encouraged to use a more solid, adult name; so people started calling him Bill.

Willie "Bill" Ng was a Pastor, an activist, and an abuse survivor. He was the

first child, the number one son, of Lily and Edward Ng. As a child, he, his seven siblings, his parents, and his grandmother lived in a one-bedroom apartment on Jackson Street. And during that time, he came to Cameron



Bill's 77th Birthday

House. "There was something attractive about Cameron House," Carol Dolezal, his former wife and life-long partner, explains, "it was, and still is, a wonderful community for kids." While at Cameron House, Willie went to the Presbyterian Church, Chinatown (PCC); and there he embraced Christ and a life of faith. Through the years of darkness in which he – and others – were victims of abuse, Bill's faith was his light, his anchor. Carol is quick to point out that even surrounded

by the pain of what he went through, those years still contained kernels of goodness and authentic love that he experienced from the Cameron House and PCC communities.

### *Reaching Outwards – and Inwards*

Following his experience in L.A., Bill became the Campus Pastor for Unitas, an ecumenical ministry at UC Berkeley. Many of his students still remember fondly how he reflected the Face of Christ to them. He saw such potential in them, believed in their dreams, helped them reach their aspirations, and inspired them to become active participants in their communities. "You need people like that," Carol says, "to lift you up that high so you believe in yourself. And I think he got that from Cameron House. That's still what Cameron House does today: takes in youth and builds up their self-esteem. God knows that's what we need to be doing." As an abuse survivor herself, Carol understands the importance of nurturing and protecting youth.

After she and Bill married, the pain from their childhood tragedies began emerging, weaving new layers of complexity – and compassion – into their lives. "He would have violent nightmares, to the point where he would be thrashing about," Carol remembers, her eyes filled with tears, "he would fall out of the bed and on to the floor, screaming. The next morning, he wouldn't remember it. It was very sad."

*Continues on page 4*

# Letter from Executive Director, May Leong



Our Gala Honorees (Virginia Smyly, Doreen Der-McLeod, & Beverly Upton), Assemblymember David Chiu, and May Leong

Like a fine wine, the annual Soul & Elegance Gala, with this year's theme of "Spirit", continues to improve each year. On February 7th, over 500 registered guests, including members of Donaldina Cameron's family, joined us to celebrate the 120th anniversary of her arrival at Cameron House (then known as the Occidental Mission Home). It was a wonderful evening to honor the amazing work of Virginia "Ginger" Smyly, Beverly Upton, and Doreen Der-McLeod, who each exemplify Donaldina's courage, spirit, compassion, faith, and dedication in helping underprivileged children and families. A special thank you goes to Honorary Chairperson Cookie Wong, who originally created this annual fundraiser in 2003.

Together we raised over \$220,000, and generous donors contributed over \$65,000 during our Fund-A-Need to help make capital improvements – such as the lighting and audio visual systems in Culbertson Hall – and to support the staffing needs we have for serving our children, young adults, and seniors.

Last quarter my column talked about our new Mission, Values, and Faith Statements. This quarter's issue debuts our updated masthead and logo; we

hope you like this new look. Right now, we're beginning to redesign our website to make it more visually consistent and user friendly. So please keep an eye out in the coming months to see what's new online.

And speaking of months, April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. In keeping with the theme of child safety, our main article features Willie "Bill" Ng, a survivor of abuse who was a "light shining in the darkness" for all of us. This article also addresses what we are doing today to keep our children and families safe at Cameron House.

In addition, our Healing Committee (consisting of CH staff and members of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, Board, advocates, and allies) continues to meet to assess our community's need and access for new or continued support through therapy, group counseling, retreats, and community workshops.

Donaldina Cameron's fierce compassion continues to serve as inspiration for us to help each individual who comes through our doors, and to be a welcome and safe community for all. Happy 120th Anniversary, Donaldina!



The Angelettes and Cobras having a great time...



...followed closely by the EPIC Commission



Dessert Dash – Angel Chinn-Morales and Roberto Alfonso



Dessert Dash – Youth enjoying their sweet claim





Eric Li

## The Story of Two Youth Leaders

### Quiet Reflection

Eric Li is a bright young man. Determined. Thoughtful. He's also one of our Friday Night Club Leaders. When you first see him, you notice his warm smile. You also notice that he's a young man of few words; but if you get a chance to chat with him, you'll hear a great deal of reflection and depth. And, as a Club Leader, he's just the kind of person you want guiding your kids.

Looking back, Eric sheepishly admits, "I was pretty stubborn." He also recalls the tremendous influence his Club Leaders, Gary Hong and Karina Woo (Cheuk), had on him. When he first came to the Friday Night Club program in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, he found that many of the kids had friendships that dated back to elementary school. While some youth would have found that intimidating, Eric took it in stride, noting that "Gary did a great job of making me feel included." Eric quickly became part of the group, enjoying his new friends; but one year, instead of going to Westminster Woods, he took summer classes. A few weeks later, noticing Eric's absence, "Gary called to check up on me and see how I was doing." That simple act impressed Eric, who has infused the same level of personal interest into his leadership role

at Cameron House.

"I try to be someone who will listen, someone the kids can talk to," he says. "One of the kids in the program was a little stubborn. Everyone here worked with him. I didn't see him as 'the trouble kid,' I just tried to hang out with him. We found a common interest, and he enjoyed talking to me about it."

Eric's philosophy is that it's better to find a way to fix things rather than worry or sulk because things are not working out the way you had planned. "I try to see the other side. Not everyone thinks the same or goes through the same experiences." He pauses for a moment and continues, "Taking the time to try to put yourself in someone else's shoes is a good place to start."

Today, he has great insight on what many of our kids face: families where both parents are working manual labor jobs, and where it is difficult to ask for money to enjoy Cameron Carnival or go on a service mission trip. He tries to assist where he can, finds joy in helping others, and tries to instill those same values in the youth he serves. "We provide for the kids through activities. Since they're in Commissions (co-ed groups), we become more like advi-

sors," he explains. "Right now they're planning their service mission trip. We're guiding them, providing support where they need it."

He fondly remembers his two service mission trips, which enabled him to be away from home, while also remaining in the safe care of the adult leaders. His first trip was to New Orleans. "It was nice walking around New Orleans and exploring the downtown area. In some ways, it was similar to San Francisco," he smiles, "but it was very hot, very humid. It was cold in San Francisco and at the airport, but when I walked off the plane, a wall of heat just hit me." Once in New Orleans, their assignment was building a house. "The foundation was already there; we put up the sidings and installations." He explains that it was at Cameron House where he first learned how to use building tools. "I had some training here while helping out with fundrais-

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Perfection is hard, practically impossible. But you can always keep growing and learning. I find that much more valuable than being perfect.

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ers. Chris (Cheuk) taught me how to use hammers to build concession stands."

His senior high service mission trip was to Boston, where his group helped the homeless. With the aid of Gary and Karina, the seniors planned the mission themselves. "The homeless had dinner with us to talk about being homeless," he says quietly. "For some of them, it wasn't because of something that happened. They just couldn't be at home.

*Continues on page 8*

Continued from page 1

They both went to therapy to address the issues that were arising from the abuse; and at the same time, they continued to focus on the church and on the Beloved Community envisioned by Martin Luther King, Jr. “We both saw in each other the gifts that God had given to us,” she says, “and we saw the grand ideas of what kind of world this could be.” Bill threw himself into every task assigned to him – Resident Director of Berkeley Presbyterian Mission Homes; Director of the Indian Welcome House; Director of Indochinese Housing, or Pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church (just to name a few) – in order to build that world, that community. As naturally as light shining in the darkness illumines the objects around it, Bill had an innate gift of reaching out to those around him and empowering them.

### *Forgiveness and Healing*

It was during this period that Bill served on the Board of Cameron House and began addressing the need for community healing. Through the willingness of the community to embrace this necessity, the Survivors’ Group was born. Talking about their experiences, consoling one another, and sharing in each other’s accomplishments helped the members of the group in their long road of healing. Along with participating in the Group, Bill did everything he could to further his own abilities to surrender, forgive, and heal. “He was constantly reading books,” Carol said, “books about healing, forgiveness, and letting go. It was an ongoing process.”

The spouses of the victims also needed a process through which they could share the difficulties they faced. Although the abuse was perpetrated upon the victims,

the pain disseminated through the victims’ families. Eventually, a Spouses’ Group was formed to deal with these issues. Similar to the Survivors’ Group, the members of the Spouses’ group developed strong emotional ties with one another. “Some of these women have come and gone,” Carol says, “but there’s a core group that have shared major milestones. Being able to discuss why we fell in love with people who experienced this sad truth of abuse, and also the difficulties that come from that, have been invaluable. I’m just so indebted to these women who have helped me through so much.”

Like the victims, the families, too, have had to grapple with forgiving. Carol had her own anger to deal with and her own forgiveness to practice. Forgiveness of her abuser. Forgiveness of Bill’s. “There was power I heard from Bill in understanding that for his own health, he had to forgive.” She continues, “Isn’t that what we’re called to as Christians? To forgive and love those who don’t seem - in our human minds - to deserve that? Forgiveness is a process. Sometimes it’s the journey and not the destination.”

The journey is not easy. It’s an arduous challenge to openly look at the past, accept it for what it was, come to terms with the injuries,

and process our emotions. And it’s beneficial to remember that forgiveness is not a feeling; it is not excusing, denying, or even forgetting. It’s a process that takes time, effort, and continual practice. As health professionals remind us, in order to move forward, find healing, and discover serenity, forgiveness is crucial. “Do we hold on to the pain and let it bring us down and inform our lives?” Carol asks, “Or do we use it and springboard off of it to become who we’re meant to be – and maybe also make meaning?”

As a Hospice Spiritual Care Counselor, Carol helps others recognize the meaning in their lives. “Love is the only thing you can take through this journey,” she says. “And that’s what I tell my patients as they’re dying: at this point, nothing else matters, because the fuel for the journey is the love that they’ve given and received on this earth.”

### *Surrounded by Love*

Bill’s life was filled with the love he had given and received. It was filled with meaning. Not only was he a Pastor, activist, and abuse survivor – he was also a friend, mentor, brother, husband, and father. His two children, Grace and Jeremy, were his greatest source of joy. On July 22, 2014, Bill passed from this life to the next. Carol speaks tearfully about that day:

*Continues on page 5*



Grace, Carol, and Jeremy

Continued from page 4

Tom Pong was with us at the hospital the last day. He was such a good friend to Bill. Tom needed to go home, but things weren't going well, so he stayed with us. Bill had been writing in this notebook all day. He rewrote our wedding vows and he wrote what he wanted to do; and as we brought the kids in, he was writing, "How was your tournament, Jeremy?" and "Grace, I'm sorry you had to leave your program." The kids asked, "Is Dad going to die tonight?" And I said, "We never know. But there's a good chance he could. So at this point, leave nothing left unsaid." They each poured out their hearts, and then I made assurances of the plans we had made for the kids that I was going to carry out, especially their going to college.

I almost died giving birth to the twins; I had undiagnosed pre-eclampsia and it was pretty severe. The day Bill died, I told him, "Just as I entrusted them to you the

day they were born and knew that they would be okay if I died at that moment, so now you're entrusting them into my arms, and I will take



Forgiveness is a process. Sometimes it's the journey and not the destination.



care of them, and I won't let them forget you."

After the kids left, Bill died. I was sitting there with Tom, just stunned, and I looked at the notebook and saw that Bill had also written down what he wanted

for his service. He wanted it at the Chinatown Church where he accepted Christ and was baptized. And he wanted me to officiate.

Immediately after he died, I felt so surrounded. May Leong offered Cameron House for the Reception, and the Cameron House community, Pastor Kimberly, and the elders and friends from the Chinatown Church - all offered support and rallied around us. And I needed that. It was really a nice calling back to me that I'm seen and I'm known by this community. I wish everyone could have that.

### Memorial Fund

Bill's life touched countless others. It empowered. It inspired. Even now, almost a year after his death, his life continues to impact others, to affect their lives. Bill is proof that as painful as one's past can be, it need not cripple or embitter us.

Continues on page 6

## Christmas in the Heart

The Presbyterian Church at Chinatown experienced Christmas in the heart on December 19th. Various Cameron House support groups from our Social Services Ministry gathered, happy to reunite and socialize. The Friends of Cameron House spent months organizing two teams - singers and dancers - to help entertain everyone. The singers delighted the audience with "An Unreserved Love" and "A New You," both conducted by Rev. Kann and musically accompanied by Mrs. Kaan.

The dancers exhibited their rhythmic abilities in their Han dance, "Dedication of Love," followed by a very special young ballet dancer, Maggie Lee. Her graceful, flowing, and ethereal movements held the entire group, young and old alike, in awe. While only a junior in High School, her sophisticated self-confidence and elegance extend far beyond her years. Not only does she uphold a regular scholastic schedule, she practices ballet six hours a week and does community work, as well. Maggie received 1st place in the Showstopper Competition last year!



Maggie Lee



There is a kind of remembrance that is not a reliving – or a revisiting – of the past, but rather a building up of the future. “It’s like other tragedies in life,” Carol elucidates, “we never forget. I think there’s health in keeping part of the past present but also showing the movement that’s happened from it – and the light that’s come from the darkness.”

After his death, a healing fund in Willie’s name was created. “It was so wonderful when Jeanne and Buddy Choy Tate suggested a healing fund,” Carol said, “There’s something about that...” her voice trails off, “that helps keep his spirit alive.”

The Willie Ng Memorial Fund continues his dream – his lifelong ambition – of empowering people to do the best they can, to make a difference in this world, and to find healing. It keeps his bright torch, which he eagerly passed on to others, lit. “From that darkness comes this light, to help make sure it never happens again to anybody else,” explains Carol, “He’s not here, but the kids and I – and the community – can keep working on making that dream come true.”

While the Fund is firmly established and has been receiving contributions, the details are still being refined. It’s clear that the overarching purpose is for healing, for empowering, and for continuing to build the Beloved Community. “Through death there’s birth,” Carol says, “and there’s new beginnings. I’m still a part of the Cameron House community; and I feel more committed than ever.”

Pointing to the small, white candle on the table, Carol says, “That’s the light we have.” As I pick it up, I see Bill’s smiling face printed on the glass.

“Some nights we light that when we have a meal. The other night Grace had taken that and put it in front of her while she was doing her homework.” Yes, in more ways than one, Bill’s light continues to shine.



### *EPILOGUE: KEEPING KIDS SAFE AT CAMERON HOUSE TODAY*

Cameron House has a deep and rich history steeped in tradition and filled with people of strong moral character – the kind of character Martin Luther King Jr. looked for in developing his Beloved Community. But as in all chronicles of the past, there are pages fraught with heartache and pain. It’s important for us to acknowledge our past and, concurrently, use it to move forward to a more healthy and safe environment.

In order to keep children safe, the California Department of Justice (DOJ) mandates background checks and fingerprinting for anyone, 18 and older, who works with children. Fingerprints are electronically forwarded to the DOJ and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation to determine if there are any reportable arrests or convictions; identifying information is also checked on the Child Abuse Central Index. (see <http://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints>) This is the law in California. But, for us, it’s

merely one small step towards creating an environment that helps kids thrive.

Laurene Chan, Director of Youth Ministries, took time out of her busy schedule to discuss how Cameron

House is ensuring that the children in our program remain safe. “We’re being entrusted with parents’ most prized gifts,” she explains, “People who think that all we do is babysit or lead games or watch movies are so wrong. There’s such a huge responsibility we take on for these kids.” Part of that responsibility is training all staff and volunteers, even youth and summer leaders, to work with children in a way that keeps them safe, builds them up, and teaches

them to respect themselves and others. It’s “living, acting, and working in a way that creates a safe environment,” states Laurene. Youth Ministries has taken that calling one step further by developing a program called C.A.S.E. – Creating a Safe Environment. In some respects, it’s like another one of our youth programs. But in others, it’s more like an umbrella under which everything – and everyone – is protected.

### *Keeping Children Safe*

For Cameron House, simply keeping the mandates of the law is not enough. Statistics indicate that an abused child must approach nine adults for help before they are believed. “We aim to break those statistics,” Laurene says. So we train our volunteers and staff to be approachable and to take notice if a child exhibits warning signs that he or she might be the victim of abuse.

“Our job is to notice when something is wrong,” she adds. In essence, the volunteers and staff – and even the

children themselves – are the eyes and ears of the community, looking out for one another. This way of looking at, and hearing, one another is not one of “I’m watching you” but one of “Is everything okay?”

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This mistake or failure does not define you. It is going to be one of many life lessons.

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Yet, even that is not sufficient. We also intentionally build the kind of community where children feel safe coming to us and talking. Staff and volunteers are trained and encouraged to sit without judgment or bias; to just listen. “We want to be approachable,” Laurene says. She readily models that approachability by telling staff, volunteers, and the children in the program, “If you see or hear me do something you don’t like, come and talk to me. Then, if you feel I am not addressing it, go to another adult. Cultivate that inner voice.” Fostering these kinds of meaningful relationships with children takes time. Trust has to be built, and unconditional love has to be nurtured. “All people need community and relationships where they can receive unconditional love. Unconditional love means that because I know who you are and what you are capable of, I see you as a child of God and I am not going to give up on you,” explains Laurene.

Another facet of being approachable is responsible leadership which, for Laurene, means using her role of power for good. “The word ‘power’ is in the Lord’s Prayer,” she claims. “This is very central for me. I want to be someone who uses Christ’s power – his power of love and healing and peace, not a power that lords it over people or hoards things

for myself – to free other people to tap into the power of Christ.”

### *Building Children Up*

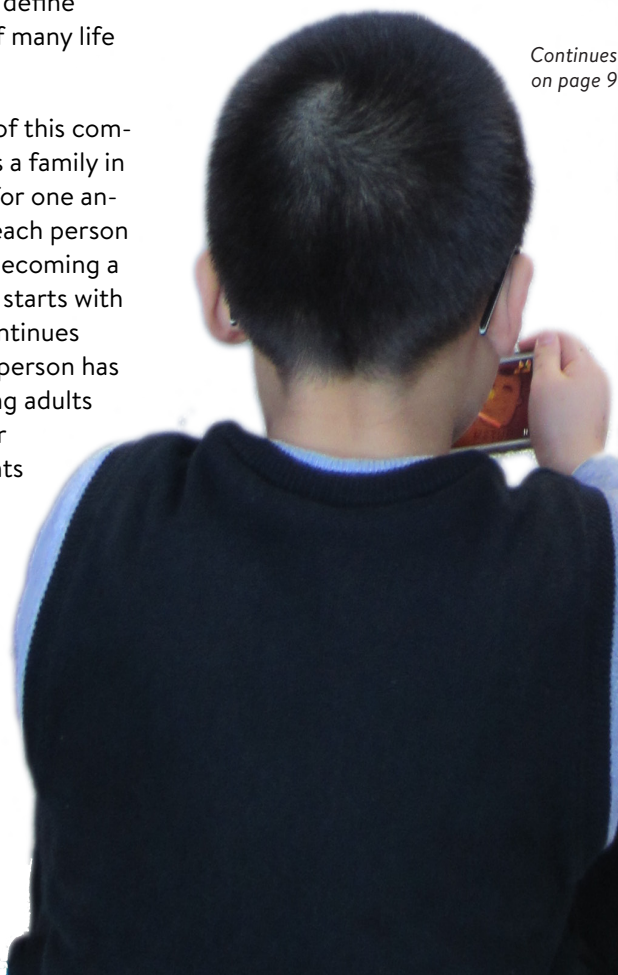
In order to feel safe, children, too, need to have a sense of power. “A lot of that is about choices,” she explains, “when the child has a choice – and the person leading respects the choice – he or she feels empowered.” Once again, there is a balance to be maintained. Empowerment is not about allowing children to do whatever they want, nor is it about ensuring they are successful in everything they do. It is giving children the freedom to ask questions, respectfully disagree, and try new things – whether or not they succeed. The important thing for them to know is that they are part of the community and that they are loved for who they are, not for what they do. On those occasions when they are not able to achieve their goals, “We tell them that whether you succeed or fail, you are still part of this community,” Laurene states, “This mistake or failure does not define you. It is going to be one of many life lessons.”

The children truly are part of this community, one that resembles a family in which everyone looks out for one another and celebrates how each person is growing, changing, and becoming a valuable member. If a child starts with us in the first grade and continues through tenth, that young person has approximately twenty young adults and adults throughout their formation. As Laurene points out, “Because these adults have been with them for a number of years, they can remind them, ‘Wow! I remember you when you were in second grade – and now you want to be a summer leader! You’ve come a long way!’ or ‘Remember when you were scared on that camping trip? Now you are leading it!’”

### *Teaching Children Boundaries and Respect*

Children also need to learn what healthy boundaries are, how to create them, and how to respect them. “We talk about mutual respect – for people, property, and space. Anything that is not going to be respecting the person will not be tolerated,” Laurene states unequivocally. If a child steps over a healthy boundary, Youth Ministries staff will talk to them, prompting them to clarify why they did that particular action or spoke those words. They’re asked how they could have handled the situation in a more loving way. “It goes back to ‘What does respect look like?’” she points out, “What do your words sound like? What are healthy phrases and what are not?” If a child refuses to cooperate, time outs are used. Learning respect and healthy boundaries takes practice, time, and energy; it is an ongoing process. But it is one worth the continual effort, especially due to the many changes we see in our

Continues on page 9



Continued from page 3

People have different reasons for the things they do.” He reflects for a moment and then continues, “They have a worse situation than we have.” It was a profound learning experience for Eric, who spent his time making – and then distributing – sandwiches to the homeless, working in soup kitchens, planting seeds in an urban garden, and teaching the homeless how to use computers.

Working with fellow Club Leaders, Jessica Huey and Allan Tan, Eric tries to shape activities for the youth that will broaden their learning. “We plan activities to help them in certain areas they want to grow in, and areas they need to grow in,” he explains. “Being able to plan and work with people they usually don’t work with, in order to get something done, is socially and emotionally positive.” Because so many youth spend a great deal of time on computers, Eric, Jessica, and Allan “plan outdoor pursuits to help them become more active and find an interest in sports.”

Eric is quick to point out, “It’s not my program, my Club, or my group. I’m a Leader, but I’m leading kids who want to be here.” And he sees his role as trying to pass on to the youth the same gifts he’s been given, while also trying to be a positive role model.

“It’s about adapting,” he states, “I am always going to be growing, learning, and that’s not necessarily a bad thing. Perfection is hard, practically impossible. But you can always keep growing and learning. I find that much more valuable than being perfect.”

### *Serene Confidence*

**K**risten Huey has a youthful, exuberant spirit. When she speaks, her hands delicately aid her expressions. She’s not afraid of being herself or of articulating her thoughts. It’s hard to imagine that just a few years ago she was “extremely shy – extremely. I would wait for someone to talk to me first.”

Like Eric, Kristen was introduced to Cameron House in 9th grade. Although she lives in Oakland, she comes across the Bay every week to attend Friday Night Club. The last two summers, she commuted that distance five days a week, leaving at 6:00 in the morning, in order to be at Cameron House by 8:30. This was not a paid job; it was an opportunity to volunteer as a Summer Youth Leader.

The Youth Leader’s days are filled: from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm the Leaders work with the children; Tuesday nights the Leaders have planning sessions followed by Fellowship. “The first week is hard,” Kristen admits, “but I like how I get to bond with the kids, meet a lot of new friends, and have a fun summer.”

In her first summer, she worked alongside more experienced Leaders and assisted the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. “Last year I was responsible for taking care of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders,” she says. Each Leader is responsible for five children, whether they’re playing at Cameron House or

*Continues on page 9*



## Aloha Carnival Fans

**S**pring is here and that means Cameron Carnival! For 67 years we have been hosting Carnival on the first Saturday of May, so mark your calendars for Saturday, May 2nd! Festivities will begin at 11:00 am and end at 7:00 pm. This year’s theme is Hawaiian. You will be sure to find plenty of island-themed games (designed and built by our Friday night Club youth), music, and food.

No Carnival would be complete without our jade waffles, silent auction, jewelry making, side-yard BBQ, therapeutic massage, and Dunko! So what’s new? This year Club youth are focusing on crafting a creative gameplay experience. All proceeds from the day support our amazing Summer youth programs. You won’t want to miss it, so come on down and say, “Aloha!”





*Continued from page 8*

out exploring on a field trip. The Leaders plan the events for the children, as well, choosing activities that are enriching, fun, and engaging. Kristen's experience improved her leadership skills while also awakening an enthusiasm for working with children. "I don't have younger siblings," she says, "so I enjoyed getting to know the kids. They're fun to be around."

Last year Kristen also attended our Westminster Woods Youth Camp, which gave her the opportunity of bonding with other Friday Night Club members and making new friends. "It was really fun – the activities and being outdoors. There was no electronic reception," she exclaimed. Although technically savvy and accustomed to using various forms of media, her elec-

tronic-free week enabled her to make a profound discovery. "I learned that I was totally fine without it," she says excitedly, "Instead of texting friends, I was able to have conversations one-on-one with someone who was right in front of me." She smiles, "I see the value of talking to them one-on-one, you can see their facial expressions and emotions with your own eyes."

During the school year, her schedule is booked. She has taught herself how to play the piano, is involved in Chinese Lion Dancing, and, as a member of the Friday Night Club, is currently working on a film project. This project is a joint venture with the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation and the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM). Directed and supported

by Anson Ho and Casey Chow, both Cameron House Alumni, our youth are learning the art of film making, editing, and interviewing. And their work on this collaborative project has enabled them to learn more about Angel Island and the hardship of countless Chinese men, women, and families who immigrated to America over a century ago. "I might be interviewing new immigrants," Kristen says enthusiastically. "There will be translators, as well. Yesterday we were writing questions on the board: How did this affect your life? How is your life different here than it was back there?" She adds, "I'm hoping to get better skills interviewing people."

Even at such a young age, she has great aspirations for her future, looking to Kelcie Wong (Associate Director of Youth Ministries) as her role model. "I want to work with youth and teach other people how to work with youth," she says, then confidently adding, "that will help me get a job that is similar to Kelcie's."

From her timid start, Kristen is blossoming into a self-assured young woman. "I am more comfortable talking to people," she readily admits. "I never used to raise my hand in class – now I do." And, when asked about the children she was responsible for in the Summer Programs, she thoughtfully answers, "I want to be the best role model I can be – and help them work hard and not give up on anything they want to do."



Kristen Huey (on the left)

## A Light Shining *Continued from page 7*

youth today. Most of the children come here like flower buds, opening and blossoming during their years in our programs. In an environment where love and respect are fostered and children are safe from abuse, they have the opportunity to become radiant lights. Even those children who begin on a more difficult path ultimately thrive and glow. "When someone who is difficult to love is loved," Laurene points out, "life is transformed."



# Adventures On Ice



Cody Friesenborg Lee with (l to R) Grace, Joanna, and Juliana

As dusk began settling on the City, 35 BAP students walked eagerly with their teachers and chaperones to Union Square’s ice skating rink. Glimpsing the lights bouncing off the ice, they donned their rented skates and nervously stepped on to the ice. For many youth, this was their first ice skating adventure, so they clung to the hands of trusted adults and tried

to straighten their wobbly legs. A few students, familiar with the sport, glided on the ice like pros. Some made falling an art form, while others raced about in circles, skating in sync with the music. Afterwards, they made the walk back to Cameron House, their energy replaced with big smiles. The next day we asked them what they enjoyed most about their skating escapade.

This special evening was due to the generosity of Safeway and the Chinatown Community Development Center. Thanks to their donation of tickets, our children had this wonderful experience. On behalf of the youth, their parents, and our staff, thank you!

## What did you like best about ice skating?



Montse—Helping teach my friends how to skate.



Juliana—When I was falling.



Monique—It was my first time skating in the middle.



Eric—I went to the middle and stood there.

# Summer in San Francisco



Nelka G. – Summer In San Francisco

This year, all of our registration is available online at [Cameronhouse.org/Summer](http://Cameronhouse.org/Summer), where you can also find information about each program, rates, dates, and more!

Imagine a place where your child gets to camp, cook, do hands-on learning activities, gain new experiences like sailing or kayaking, make friends with others from around the city, and learn about themselves in the process!

If this sounds like something you - or a youth in your life — may be interested in, consider signing up for one of Cameron House’s summer programs. With our 60+ years in youth programming, we are excited to bring San Francisco another great summer!

If you have any questions, please contact:

**Ventures and BYP**  
Kelcie Wong | 415-781-0401 x104 | [Kelcie@cameronhouse.org](mailto:Kelcie@cameronhouse.org)

**Solid Ground and Summer Leadership Development**  
Cody Friesenborg Lee | 415-781-0401 x112 | [Cody@cameronhouse.org](mailto:Cody@cameronhouse.org)

| Program                                      | Ages                | Location (drop off and pick up)            | Setting  |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>BYP</b>                                   | 1st–5th Grade       | Cameron House                              | Indoor academic focused program                  |
| <b>Ventures</b>                              | 1st–5th Grade       | Cameron House or Covenant (321 Taraval st) | Outdoor enrichment focused program               |
| <b>Solid Ground</b>                          | 6th–8th Grade       | Cameron House or Covenant (321 Taraval st) | Outdoor enrichment and community service program |
| <b>Summer Leadership Development Program</b> | 9th Grade and above | Cameron House or Covenant (321 Taraval st) | Leadership development program                   |





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415-781-0401

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## Upcoming Events

- May 2 67th Annual Cameron Carnival  
Cameron House
- June 15 Summer Programs begin  
Cameron House and Covenant Presbyterian  
Church (pick-up and drop-off)
- Aug 9–14 Westminster Woods Youth Camp  
Occidental, California
- Aug 29 RealPower Joong Fest  
Cameron House