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## Upcoming Events

**June 29 - July 3** CHYA Mission Trip  
New Orleans, LA

**Aug 9 - 14** Westminster Woods Youth Camp  
Occidental, California

**Aug 25 - 27** Phone-a-thon

**Aug 29** RealPower Joongfest  
Cameron House

# Current



Alan and Ed having fun with one another and the kids.

Standing at the front of the room, the World Record holder for the highest freefall parachute jump, Alan Eustace, held the children and adults in rapt attention. “Ready for the drop?” he asked. The room resounded with a loud, “Yes!”

All eyes looked to the large screen in Culbertson Hall, eagerly awaiting the video of Alan’s incredible leap from the edge of space. “Okay, we’re going to do the countdown together.”

Everyone chimed in, yelling: “Five, four, three, two, one...”

The video captured Alan’s freefall to earth - having been ‘jettisoned’ by a gigantic helium balloon that had elevated him to over 135,000 feet (planes fly at 35,000 feet). Donning a used NASA spacesuit redesigned specifically for this skydive, Alan broke the speed of sound in 31 seconds, creating a sonic boom heard by

observers on the ground. At 51 seconds, his speed reached 822 mph. And at 4 minutes he deployed his parachute.

While the children were fascinated with his jump, their favorite part was his “crash landing”: a somersault in which they could see him tumbling - quite literally - head over heels.

Alan engaged the students in dialogue, asking them questions and responding thoughtfully to their replies. “Could you guys tell me what the challenges are of visiting the stratosphere? What do you think I need?”

As various answers rang throughout the room, he encouraged them to think big.

“How many people want to ride on a rocket?” he asked next. The students all raised their hands. “Yeah, so do I. But I didn’t have a rocket, so I needed something else to get me up there. Any ideas on what that could be?”

“A plane,” yelled one child.

“A balloon,” shouted another.

“A balloon!” confirmed Alan. “Who would have thought that a balloon could lift something my size all the way up to the stratosphere? Yeah! It’s a giant one, like 600 feet tall.” That’s the equivalent of stacking ten Cameron Houses on top of each other.

As he captivated their imaginations, Alan also stressed the importance of teamwork and of studying hard. “It took a huge team to do this,” he told them, “there were experts in meteorology, doctors, and experts in balloons; all these different people were involved. It’s not an individual thing.”

His comments were underscored further by Edward Lu, a Chinese American NASA Astronaut for twelve years. “The most important thing about being an astronaut is to know

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# MAY ON THE MONTH OF JUNE

The month of June is when schools let out and summer programs begin. Students in grades K-12 move up or change schools, and most of our graduating seniors go on to higher education. Thanks to the generous donors who fund our Academic and Vocational Scholarships, it is also a time when we select recipients and grant awards based on criteria that have been designated by our donors. One scholarship may be given to a deserving student to attend a community college, another to fund a youth who demonstrates passion in giving back to the community, and another for a student who shows financial need. Whatever the criteria, all of the awards recognize the many years of hard work our youth have put into their education, their extra-curricular activities, the amazing growth in leadership and service that they have undergone during their time at Cameron House, and the hard sacrifices of their parents.

What I love most about this program is that it reflects a deep value at Cameron House: the value of seeing the potential in others that they don't always see in themselves.

We have so many stories about alumni who either describe themselves as having been "the troublemaker" or who we remember as a young person trying to deal with a lot of challenging issues. More often than not, they turned out to

become some of our most outstanding leaders.

One alumna that comes to mind entered our Bilingual Afterschool Program (BAP) as a very shy, non-English speaker. With support, love, patience, and her own hard work, she came out of her shell and blossomed into an articulate, smart engineer, who today is responsible for multi-million dollar projects at a public utilities



Academic Scholarship funders and graduating high-school recipients.

company and regularly uses her voice "to tell the guys what to do." She is a role model of possibility for our young female students and to parents who are usually reluctant to believe that their children will turn out OK when we purposefully schedule play time and seemingly non-academic enrichment activities instead of more hours of homework practice.

Our kids vary in their learning styles, experiences, and family situations. Whether a middle-schooler faced with bullying at school, an elementary student with learning disabilities, or a high-school student with depression from years of witnessing violence at home, they know we are here to help them. Some of our youth live in single-earner households. They end up taking

on adult responsibilities and caring for younger siblings because dad or mom is working multiple jobs or long hours to ensure even the most rudimentary housing for the family. Other times we work with youth who come from homes where both parents have the time to be actively involved in a loving and supportive way.

We also work with parents and grandparents who may be struggling daily to learn English, pay rent, and get enough food on the table, all while dealing with personal traumas. Our Social Services Ministry staff and volunteers see each person as someone who is greater than his or her current situation. We know

that with enough attention, support, and guidance, we can help them see the possibility in their lives. This is especially evident in some of our Cancer Support Group participants who have recently formed a prayer circle to support a cancer patient undergoing treatment. While not all of the Group members identify themselves as Christians, they believe in the value of compassionate care and the power of prayer.

Seeing the potential in others and offering a loving hand with compassion is what we do best at Cameron House. We are able to do this thanks to the support of our donors, alumni, and community partners. As we look to the future, one tradition remains the same: living our values and demonstrating our faith-in-action every day.

# SITTING STILL

In the late 1940s thousands of Chinese citizens immigrated to America, including one 16-year-old girl, delicate and vulnerable. Stepping off the ship on to the wooden San Francisco docks, she looked around and realized how far from Shanghai she was. She carried everything she owned: the \$4,000 her father had given her, three suitcases, and one large trunk. If her story were

“When they feel successful in their work, they don’t want to fail; they want to learn.”

to end there, it would be daunting enough, but that was just the beginning of Jeannette Wei’s American journey. After three weeks with her Aunt and Uncle in Berkeley, she boarded a Greyhound bus and took the long ride to Wesleyan College, which her sister was also attending. Jeannette had experienced such a sheltered life in Shanghai that she was often confused by the racial discrimination she witnessed in the South.

Eventually, she transferred to Mills College and went on to get degrees in Education and Psychology. She married and had children. And through her adopted kinship with Mr. K. L. Kwong, President of the Bank of Canton

and a trusted friend of her father’s, she became friends with Donaldina Cameron.

*When I met Miss Cameron, she was already in her nineties, but she was very much alive. Miss Cameron had a quiet voice and a gentle demeanor. She had deep faith and strength. She was brave but not confrontational. I got to know her by the stories she told. She would talk to me, and the next time I saw her, months later, she would say, “Remember what I was telling you?” And she would pick up right where she left off. I heard about the children, the sick, the families. Many families were separated or the fathers worked a lot. It’s very similar to what children are going through today.*

Like Donaldina, Jeannette has joyfully dedicated her life to helping children. And, given her experience, it’s not surprising that she has great compassion for immigrant youth.

She has been teaching for over 56 years, is one of the Founders of the Ohlone Elementary School in Palo Alto, and for almost ten years has been part of our Bilingual Afterschool Program (BAP) as Interim Director and Educational Consultant. Jeannette has made an incredible impact on Cameron House and on the hundreds of children she’s helped. She formalized our academic structure to establish

higher standards; worked with parents, teachers, and principals to ensure each child’s individual needs are met; and helped shape the principles of what, and how, we teach our youth. She’s been busy. “You can’t really sit still when you are a good teacher,” she says.

Later, Jeannette shared the following insights:

*We need to talk to parents and tell them that it is not good to always push. Children need to take some responsibility, too. When it is play time, they play. When it is work time, they work. When they feel successful in their work, they don’t want to fail; they want to learn.*

*In games, we teach them to play and have fun, it’s not about winning. We help them talk about things and compromise. They learn to collaborate and cooperate.*

*And we show them how to give back to other people and how giving, instead of taking, brings you joy.*

*Parents may not have the time for these things, but at Cameron House, we do.*

These are the philosophies that differentiate Cameron House’s Afterschool Program from the others. We work with our children’s families and schools so that each child receives individualized care. We offer workshops

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Jeannette helps one of our 4th Grade BAP students with her homework.



Carole Chinn-Morales, Jeannette, and Tom Pong enjoy a moment of levity.



that you can't do it all by yourself," he explained, "Whenever you're trying to do something very big or very hard, it's important to have help."

He went on to tell the story of his father, Charlie Lu, who left Hong Kong for the United States in 1954. His family was extremely poor, so he had to borrow money to pay for his ship passage. "He had no money when he got here, absolutely nothing," Ed told the children, piquing their interest. "Can you imagine yourself going to another country where you don't know anybody? You don't even speak the language very well? What would you do?" He continued, telling the children that there were some "very, very nice people here at Cameron House," who went to the dock, greeted him, and took him and a few other students out to dinner. "Sixty years later, he would still talk about the wonderful dinner he had in San Francisco," Ed stated.

With a scholarship to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the willingness to work hard, he took jobs washing dishes to support himself and to repay every person who had lent him money. He paved the way for his children to brave the new frontiers they would encounter.

Their new frontiers, however, were beyond anything that Charlie could have imagined back in 1954, almost five decades before the International Space Station was launched into orbit (which, at one point, was Ed's home for six months). Showing everyone a picture of the space shuttle Atlantis blasting off from the launch pad, Ed humorously referred to it as his "other ride to work." Travelling at speeds of 18,000 mph, the Atlantis was able to reach space in a mere 8 minutes.

His journey as an Astronaut also included flying the Russian Soyuz with

Cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko. On one of his Soyuz flights, while firing up the engines to rotate the ship, he was struck by his unique situation. "How strange this is," he thought, "a Chinese American kid from a small town in upstate New York, mother and father both from China, flying a Russian spaceship."

And now, with the assistance of some of the world's most brilliant minds, his latest project is protecting the earth from being hit by asteroids. This venture involves building a 2,630-pound telescope that will be launched to find and track asteroids (any that threaten the earth could then be deflected).

In this amazing universe, with billions of stars and galaxies we aren't even aware of yet, there are a few things that never change. Alan and Ed brought that 'back to earth' for us with their stories.

Like Ed, Alan also has a connection with Cameron House that dates back to the early 1950s – when his Parents-in-Law, Helen and Benson Kwan, were actively participating in the programs.

Using her gifts and vivacious social skills to lead clubs, commissions, and training classes, Helen began coming to Cameron House in 1952. First 'recruited' as a camp leader for "Best Day of the Week," she soon became

fully immersed in a life of faithful service.

—“—  
“How strange this is ... a Chinese American kid from a small town in upstate New York, mother and father both from China, flying a Russian spaceship.”  
—”—

A shy, young child, Benson grew up in the programs. Thoughtful and intelligent, he eventually assumed several leadership positions: Superintendent of Sunday School and High School Commissioner (just to name a few). Both Helen and Benson gave their time and talents to the people around them, inspiring them, in turn, to reach out and help others less fortunate.

Fast forward a number of decades to when their bright, philanthropic daughter Kathy meets Alan Eustace, mechanical engineer and computer science whiz. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today they help to continue the rich tradition of giving back and assisting the most vulnerable members of our society – immigrant children, families, and elderly – through the Eustace-Kwan Family Foundation.



Our children, engrossed in Alan's and Ed's presentation.

# HOPE & COMPASSION

More than 1,000 health care practitioners, activists, social workers, researchers, and academics from all across the country greeted Vice President Joe Biden with a standing ovation as he took the stage at the 7th Biennial National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence in Washington D.C. Speaking eloquently on the epidemic of domestic violence, he reminded the audience that its long-term consequences – anxiety, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, injuries, and death – affect families, communities, and entire societies.

The event, held from March 19th through 21st, was organized by FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that was the catalyst in passing the Federal Violence Against Women Act of 1994. For more than 30 years, FUTURES has provided innovative programs, policies, and campaigns to empower individuals and organizations that work to end violence against women and children. Thanks to

a generous grant through FUTURES, our two Case Managers, Ming Quan Chang and Karen Chu, were able to attend. Not only was their airfare, hotel, and food fully funded, but through this trip, their collaborative relationship with North East Medical Services (NEMS) and the Asian Women's Shelter (AWS) was strengthened.

This active partnership enables each agency's social workers, health care providers, and domestic violence advocates to come together and share their differing levels of expertise. Our SSM team works with AWS in training NEMS' staff on recognizing the signs of domestic violence (DV) among their patients and intervening to help them. Frequently, patients are referred to AWS where they can stay and get counseling. In some cases, the survivors

don't want to leave their homes yet, so they come to Cameron House for short-term DV counseling, safety planning, and case management.

Attending the Conference allowed Ming and Karen to learn about the latest research, broaden their social networking, and gain more resources to better serve our clients. Through SSM's programs, our clients receive hope, compassion, and the self-determination to eliminate violence in their lives.



Ming Quan Chang and Karen Chu at the National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence in Washington D.C.



Jeannette, BAP Teacher, Freddie (in the back), and one of our 3rd Grade BAP students.

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to help parents and children understand and relate better to one another. We teach children the value of respect, personal responsibility, cooperation, and compassion.

Currently, we are hiring an Academic Curriculum Coordinator to continue providing high-quality academic development. Although Jeannette will be retiring at the end of this school year, it is clear that the tremendous impact she's made to BAP will continue for generations to come. Perhaps in this next phase of her life, Jeannette can finally have the luxury of 'sitting still,' at least more often than before.



# CARNIVAL AS SEEN BY...

## ...THE VIP\*

by Sabrina Gee Shin

This year I was the “Cameron Carnival VIP.”

Man, I felt like the total Queen!!

Let me explain. Carnival is magical . . . whether you are 3 or 93.

It’s a community gathering, an annual miracle of young, old, and everyone in between, pulling together for fabulous and delicious fun. It’s an exercise in leadership that showcases our community’s ingenuity and talents.

Is there any way to have the ULTIMATE Cameron Carnival experience?

Yes. As an auction item at the February 7th Cameron House Gala - I bid and WON the honor of being the FIRST EVER CAMERON CARNIVAL VIP. It was the brainchild of Josh Chuck.

My day began with Brian Lim and Desi Ng, opening the blocked off Cameron House alleyway. They didn’t yell at me and say, “Sorry miss, the alley is closed today, you need to go down to Portsmouth Square to park.” Nope, they moved the barricade, let me drive through, and told me a special parking space was waiting for me!

This privilege ALONE was worth the auction amount! My parking space was literally 10 feet from Cameron Carnival ACTION! I was

able to return to my car and use it like a locker throughout the day! If you understand Chinatown and the rarity of parking . . . you really understand this is a priceless experience.

“Carnival is a community gathering, an annual miracle of young and old and everyone in between, pulling together for fabulous and delicious fun.”

Amazing Thing #2 -- The PRIMO toilet. While thousands of carnival go-ers must share one of two very small bathrooms off Culbertson Hall (and wait in line), I was shown my own private bathroom to use for the entire day. Clean with plants and sunshine. I went there at least five times, just for the ecstasy of it all. Of my 40 years at Cameron House, I had no idea such a posh, clean bathroom existed.

The day just got better and better. Laurene Chan greeted me with a Cameron House tote full of CH swag, swanky snacks picked out by May Leong, \$200 worth of tickets, and VIP Coupons that I could redeem throughout the day.

It was great fun being Ticket Fairy, sharing tickets with my niece, treating people to Jade Waffles, and supplementing

the bean bag arsenal for Dunko throwers.

Speaking of Dunko . . . one of the primo privileges of Carnival VIP is nominating a personal Dunko target. Problem was, everyone I wanted to dunk is older than 60 years old -- and I forgot that while it’s easy to be dunked, it’s hard to climb out again and again. Nonetheless, as Carnival VIP, my one ticket was worth 25 throws. I teamed up with community leaders Gordon Chin and Norman Fong to dunk CCDC Planning Manager and SF Planning Commissioner, Cindy Wu. Damn that felt good!

I then rushed off for my VIP massage – 30 minutes of deep tissue massage by Kimball and Chelsea Wong. In this total zen state, I cruised upstairs to the jewelry bazaar to pick out any necklace I wanted. Wow, this is really living the life!

The topper, of course was my very own VIP Cameron Carnival goldfish. I was rushing off to volunteer in the kitchen (a CH girl can only take so much pampering), so I gave the coupon to my friend and said, “Find a kid to give this to.” She brought it to a Grandma who was at the Goldfish booth with her grandson. He was trying to win one but couldn’t, and he got a free VIP goldfish!

So I’m warning all future Auction challengers . . . I dare you to bid against me next year! I had the taste of Cameron Carnival VIP and I’m not willing to give it up anytime soon!

*\*Sabrina was the winning bidder of our Live Auction “Carnival V.I.P. Package” at the 2015 Spirit, Soul & Elegance Gala.*

## ... A VOLUNTEER

by Catherine Ko

Having been founded just two years ago, the Friends of Cameron House\*\* enjoy various socializing and networking



Sabrina Gee Shin (left), Carnival VIP, takes a break from her Kitchen Duties with Norma Fong Chan.



Sara Wong and local youth intently aiming for a volcano.



Alvin Chang, Norman Lau, Kenny Lin, and Martin Ko about to enjoy some delicious bratwurst.

activities such as singing, dancing, and cooking, as well as field trips and holiday parties. Carnival, however, is my favorite. For over thirty years, I have arrived early at Carnival, quickly arranged activities for my sons, and rushed to the (old) White Elephant Sale. In recent years, I have also volunteered at the Jade Waffle and Thai Iced Tea booth. Their delicious waffles and creamy, smooth ice teas are real summer treats. This year, I was responsible for taking orders. Starting at 11:30 am, hundreds of waffles and cups of tea were sold. Finally, I had a chance to stretch my tired back, wondering if I was getting old. Then I heard Ming reminding me to take a break. It was already 2:30 pm! Time flies when you are having fun.

*\*\*a core peer group of SSM volunteers who assist and support Cameron House services and events*

## ... SPECIAL NEEDS YOUTH & THEIR FAMILIES

Since 1999, Nancy Lim Yee has been bringing children and adolescents with special needs and their families to Cameron Carnival. It's a yearly event that the families eagerly await. As part of the Chinatown Technology for Disabilities Program, the group is a strong one, many of the members have been part of it for years. Nancy

Lim Yee, former Executive Director of the Chinatown Child Development Center and co-founder of the group has watched these kids grow up. "Some of them started coming at 5 or 6 years old," she tells us, "They're now teenagers and remind us: Is it time for Carnival yet?"

In 1999, Nancy and Dr. Peter Ng of the Chinatown Public health Center started the program mainly as a project for the kids. It quickly evolved into a program where volunteers were building computers for the kids and putting them in their homes. Then the parents became involved, learning the computer so they could help their children. Using technology also enabled them to network. "They're a good group of parents, supporting one another and sharing resources," Nancy says. "You can feel isolated when you have children with special needs."

And when those children come from immigrant homes, the needs become even greater. Limited incomes, lack of transportation, and the need for bilingual doctors (or translation services) complicate an already difficult and burdened process for the parents. Although Dr. Ng is retired, he still continues to volunteer his time at the Disabilities Access Clinic, where he provides valuable medical services and bilingual skills to special-needs children who cannot get primary care anywhere else.

Cameron Carnival provides a much needed opportunity for these children and their families to get together, relax, and socialize. The children enjoy the games and food, and the parents relish the chance to connect with friends. "The families don't get out much," Nancy explains. We're elated that we can be a reliable, wholesome, and indispensable gathering place for them.

## ...OUR YOUTH

### *My favorite part of Carnival was...*

"...The jumpy house and getting a goldfish." - Mabel (2nd grade)

"... The Jade Waffles taste yummy. I really liked the game booths. I was trying to get a gold fish again since my fish from 2013 Carnival died. I was feeding it too much." - Nelka (4th grade)

"...Food! The nachos, there was a lot. The Jade waffles!" - Jesse (7th grade) & Kevin (6th grade)

**THANK YOU** to all of our Sponsors, Volunteers, and everyone who donated goods and services to our 2015 Carnival. Because of YOU, hundreds of people, young and old, had a wonderful experience!

