

Current



Back to BASICS

For Cameron House youth, summer and Westminster Woods go hand-in-hand. Along with adventure and fun, the campers experience self-discovery and personal growth. And while this program traditionally serves 6th - 12th grade students, we know that their growth doesn't end when they graduate from high school.

Our Youth Ministries team saw an opportunity for further development during this crucial transition period from adolescence to adulthood. We also noticed that many graduates wanted to remain connected to Cameron House after their senior year of high school. This was the impetus for BASIC, a pilot program that stands for "Brother and Sisters in Christ/Community." BASIC is a separate residence camp at Westminster Woods that allows these recent graduates to further develop their skills and prepare for life beyond high school.

Under the direction of Casey Chow, Leadership Development Programs

Coordinator, and Alyssa Jow, AMBITION Club Leader, 15 graduating seniors experienced a different challenge in the familiar setting of West. As a small group, the BASIC youth had their own keynote "Life Lessons" led by CH

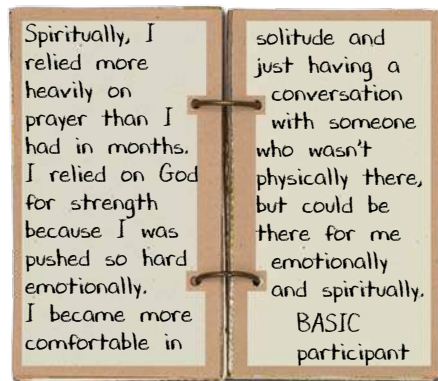
be expected from them as young adults in the 'real world'.

BASIC participants also learned about faith exploration, relationships, and families; and they received sound, practical tips on public speaking, social situations, and the importance of body language. During their five days at BASIC, the seniors accomplished the Ropes Challenge Course and planned the Family Olympics and the first Middle School Vespers of the week. They also had occasions to help the younger campers at West, who were inspired by their leadership, assistance, and testimonials. While this was certainly an increased level of responsibility from their former years, the graduates welcomed the opportunities to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zones. They also gained an even greater appreciation for their Commission group, Cameron House, and all of the work that goes on behind the scenes to make West such an amazing experience!



BASIC participants

alumni and staff -- Laurene Chan, Vince Chan, Chris Cheuk, Pastor Kimberly Elliot, Rene Kamm, Gordon Lee, Taryn Moy, Wilson Tan, Kelcie Wong, and A.J. Yip. The speakers led different workshops and discussions about what will



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May's Corner

In today's complex world filled with social, racial, political, and economic discord, sometimes we need to unplug and connect to what matters. This was the theme for this year's Westminster Woods youth camp. I was asked to reflect on one of the topics (Friends, Family, Self, God, and Community) and chose Connecting to Friends.

They say that in life you don't get to choose your family and while that's true, you **do** get to select your friends. The beauty of friendship is that you can make friends throughout your life – when you're young, in college, or even later as an adult. While I live far away from many of my friends, I still feel close to them. Some of them go back to elementary and high school; others I met as an older adult, after turning 40.

One such friend is Honora Wade. We met about 15 years ago, while I was living in Seattle. She was a larger-than-life kind of person. When she walked into a room, it didn't take long before you knew her life's story – how she was

born into a family
with a Jewish
mother
and Irish
father,
had
lots of



May Leong and Honora Wade

siblings and half-siblings, grew up in Hollywood, and celebrated Passover and Christmas. While Honora always did most of the talking, she also encouraged others to speak up. She was highly intelligent and gregarious but was also an introvert. She mentored and inspired countless others with her energy and passion.

We both enjoyed concerts, movies, plays, and serving our community. We bonded over our belief in showing faith through action. Neither of us attended church regularly, because faith-through-action was our way of praying and showing gratitude, humility, and sacrifice. It's also how we experienced joy, inspiration, and wonder. The Cameron House community met Honora when she facilitated an All-Staff retreat and volunteered at Carnival. She supported, and was touched by, our mission.

We were always there for one another. She once chased thieves with me after we caught them robbing my house. Luckily, they didn't have guns, but one dropped a knife during our pursuit; we always laughed at how silly we looked, two middle-aged women running after high school boys, yelling "Shame on you, I see you!"

When Honora became ill with Pancreatic Cancer, I was one of the first people she called. I was devastated, because the odds of her surviving were not good. Honora endured two rounds of chemotherapy and decided to stop so she could enjoy what time she had left. She went to concerts, ate her favorite foods, and saw friends when she could. She made a video as a

goodbye gift and I got to dance in it.

I flew to Seattle for her memorial service. Though I miss her a lot, I find comfort in the blessings of our friendship.

Sometimes when you feel like you don't have any choices in life, you can always choose to be a friend and unplug to connect with what matters – your friendships.

As we move into the season of Thanksgiving, we hope this inspires you to take the time to celebrate with the season with friends. They are the gifts we get to choose and nurture, especially when the world swirls around us, rife with fear, anger, complexities, and demands. Friendships bring out the best in life: love, joy, laughter, tears, and compassion, which we can all use more of during these extremely challenging times. Blessings to you and your loved ones.



Save the Date

for our next

**Community
Soul & Elegance Gala**

Saturday, February 18, 2017

5:30 pm - 11:00 pm

at the

South San Francisco
Conference Center

Our Winning Scholars!

On Friday, June 10th, a total of 14 Academic and Vocational Scholarship Awards (totaling \$19,500) were granted to ten Cameron House graduating high school students. These students have demonstrated academic and leadership success both in and outside the classroom, and we congratulate them on their achievement.

Our generous Scholarship donors have given unselfishly to support the continued education of our youth and to lighten their financial burdens. We thank them for their substantial and meaningful gifts:

- *David and Pauline Chan Scholarship: Awarded to Kevin Bao*

Criteria: A GPA of at least 3.0 with plans to attend either SFSU or City College of SF. One award of \$1,500.

- *Karen and Glen Chew's The Spirit of Leadership and Giving Scholarship: Awarded to Juliana Mak and Victor Ye*

Criteria: A history of community service through Cameron House,

a caring and kind heart toward others, demonstration of leadership qualities, a GPA of at least 3.2, and financial need. Two awards of \$1,500 each.

- *Micah Chu and Foy White-Chu Scholarship: Awarded to Juliana Mak and Shannon Yong for second year*

Criteria: Seeking to pursue higher education in either academic or vocational institution, GPA of at least 3.0, and volunteered in Cameron House's summer programs for two years. Two awards of \$750 with opportunities for renewable scholarships each year in college (with a maximum of three years) if they fulfill requirements of a 3.0 GPA and 50 volunteer hours.

- *Kenneth and Josephine Kwong Scholarship Award for Leadership and Service: Awarded to Kaitlyn Bui, Henry Li, Tyler Lee, Sarah Zhou, and Andrew Huang*

Criteria: exemplifies Cameron House's tradition of leadership and service to the community and desires

to pursue higher education to better themselves and the world. Up to six awards of \$1,500 each.

- *Clovis and Pat Shem Scholarship: Awarded to Henry Li and Christine Yan*

Criteria: A GPA of at least 3.0 and great financial need. Two awards of \$1,500 each, with additional award of \$1,000 to one of those recipients with even greater financial need.

- *Asian Pacific Islanders for Professional & Community Advancement: Awarded to Christine Yan and Sarah Zhou*

Criteria: Great financial need, which includes needing to work during school; first generation in family going to college; proven leadership at Cameron House; involvement in the larger community outside of Cameron House; US Citizen or green card status. Two awards of \$1,000 each.

Our last scholarship was awarded in recognition of the character and growth of two of our graduating seniors. A few anonymous donors pooled their funds

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(L) Board Chair Thomas Pong surrounded by CH Staff and Scholarship Donors and Recipients

A chat with Alyssa Jow, **AMBITION** Club Leader and Representative Leader of **BASIC**

Why did you take on this role (of being the Representative Leader)?

For two main reasons. One was to see how effective it might be. Because I trusted Sherman and Laurene for believing that this was the perfect year to try this new pilot program, I was excited to be on board with them. The second reason was that I would be with the youth that I've been working with for the past five years through the club program. This allowed me to spend more time with them before the majority of them leave for college.

What did your role entail?

I was one of the leaders who helped plan and organize the schedule and activities for the group. The logistics and planning definitely took some time. Knowing that this was the pilot year for this program, we were developing a majority of the schedule by scratch. We had to correlate the schedule with the main camp because certain time slots couldn't be changed, like the meal times. But the

rest of the logistics and planning were decided by Casey and me.

Other logistics and planning were with our youth in the BASIC program, because there were two main activities that they had to plan for the main camp. Getting them to learn to make time during the week to plan for these



BASIC participants at West

activities was sometimes difficult, but in the end, it all worked out.

What made it challenging?

I think the challenging part about this pilot program was that we weren't sure what the other leaders thought about it. I didn't want our youth to

think this was going to be a lecture; I wanted them to be able to engage in it through discussions and activities, and to hopefully get something out of it.

What made it fun?

Much of the planning was required before going up, which made me appreciate and enjoy the week with my youth. There were many enjoyable activities like our keynote speakers, fellowships, BASIC campfire & Vespers, and planning Family Group Olympics & Middle School Vespers.

What would you say to seniors who are thinking about joining BASIC after their senior year?

I would definitely try and encourage other high school graduates to join BASIC

because they'll be able to have a different experience from the main camp. BASIC is that next stepping stone into the adult world. So when joining BASIC, they should approach it with an open mind, be vulnerable, and be eager to learn more about themselves.



Interview with Taryn Moy, FAITH and UNITY Club Leader and Key Note Speaker

Can you give me a little background about yourself and your experience with CH?

I was a summer Daycamp Ventures Leader back when I was in high school, then I attended the Friday Night Club program and became a Leader for Club after college.

CH taught me great leadership skills being a Daycamp Leader and work-

ing with kids for a whole summer. Also being a Club Leader taught me a lot in working with our youth. It was valuable learning how to make lesson plans and plan activities for the kids, work with other Leaders, and also be patient with the kids. There are many skills that I use to this day in dealing with my own kids.

Why did you say, "Yes" when asked to be a Key-Note speaker?

I wanted to help my own previous Club

kids and was happy to participate when they asked.

How did you choose your subject (Depression)?

I wanted to talk about something that I thought would be helpful for youth.

What was the most challenging part of this process and why?

I think trying to get a 'read' on the kids

Cancer Support Group

When you hear the word ‘cancer,’ what goes through your mind? Chemo? Radiation? Hospital? In the Chinese community, that word carries an even more frightening tone. It’s a synonym for ‘death sentence.’ But there’s more hardship involved than most people understand.

When monolingual Chinese people try to get information and resources on health care, nutrition, and treatment, they find that most of it is written in other languages and is based on a Western diet. That linguistic barrier alone can impede access to care and treatment. To exacerbate the matter, oftentimes family members and friends will keep their distance out of fear of bad luck or of ‘catching the cancer.’ When this social support is withdrawn, the person struggling with cancer - and their closest family members who stay to help - begin to feel ostracized, lonely, and helpless. And when treatments create fatigue and radically alter one’s way of life, it can be depressing.

That’s where our Cancer Support Group (CSG) steps in. Led by Mei Teng, Social Services Team Manager, the CSG is the only cancer support group in the San Francisco Bay area that focuses on Chinese speakers by providing linguistically and culturally appropriate services, encouraging both male and female cancer patient participation, and providing services to family members.

One CSG member was a chef before he was diagnosed with Nasopharyngeal cancer (a cancer that starts behind the nose, where it meets the throat). After the radiation treatment, he lost his taste of food and was heartbroken that he could no longer cook for himself, his family, or his job. He was also scared because he didn’t know what else he could do to support his family. Another

member said that when her husband was diagnosed with cancer, their family members refused to go to the hospital to see him and they even stopped picking up phone calls. The uterine cancer surgery of one of our CSG members affected her fertility, and she was unable to have children. Because of this, her husband left her, which created yet another difficulty for her to overcome.

The members of the CSG find great comfort in sharing their feelings, experiences, and concerns - in their native tongue - with people going through similar experiences. And they are able to share important information that is culturally relevant, such as healing recipes that are based on an Asian diet and cancer resources that are available in Chinese. If members are unable to attend the meetings, they can have home and hospital visits, which helps them feel even more supported, more hopeful, and more equipped to fight their disease, because they are surrounded by people who truly care about them. The family members, too, receive support in managing their frustrations and fears, which greatly lessens the psychological burden of caring for their loved ones.

No matter how you look at it, our CSG members feel more supported and less fearful since joining the ‘family.’ They are able to express themselves fully in their native language, they receive culturally applicable information, and they are surrounded by the supportive and caring environment that Mei has fostered - the solicitude that the members receive from her and one another promotes bonding, understanding, and healing.

An Interview with Mei Teng, CSG Facilitator

How large is the Cancer Support Group?

Over the years the group has grown to about 40 to 50 members at each meeting.

What are average age ranges?

65% of our members are in their 60’s and over; 17% are in their 50’s; and 18% are under the age of 50.

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Two members of our Cancer Support Group helping each other on their journey!



David and Pauline Chan and scholarship recipient Kevin Bao



Glen and Karen Chew and scholarship recipient Juliana Mak

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to create this special scholarship.

The Asian Pacific Islanders for Professional & Community Advancement (APCA) Northern California is a 501c3 nonprofit Employee Resource Group at AT&T. A major goal of APCA is to promote diversity and its advantages throughout their corporation and our communities. They are dedicated to creating alliances and partnerships that enhance professional and leadership opportunities for students in our communities in the creative arts, music, media, and public service.

From our grateful recipients and Cameron House Staff, we give a huge *Thank You* to our wonderful donors! 🍁



Nancy Chee presents Andy Tsoi with a scholarship given by anonymous Cameron House donors



June L. Tom of APCA at AT&T presenting scholarships to Christine Yan and Sarah Zhou

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What kinds of cancers are represented in the CSG?

Since about 87% of the CSG members are females, the #1 cancer is breast cancer, followed by lung and liver cancer. One of the reasons that the support group has more females is because most Chinese male patients are more reserved and unwilling to talk about their inner fears, worries, and other emotions. They distance themselves from others, and it is a challenge for the hospital social workers and medical staff to have them join a support group.

How many cancer patients bring their family members?

We have 10 family members in the support group. Recently, we found more family members needing emotional support or counseling. For example, one family member was diagnosed with depression, yet she refuses to take medication and has a hard time leaving her home to attend

CSG. A Friends of Ai volunteer is calling her weekly, and the support group coordinator is encouraging her to visit her psychologist for help.

What about cancer patients who can't come to the meetings?

In 2012, the cancer support group ran its first training for a hospital and home visitation volunteer team, Friends of Ai. We saw the need to extend emotional support to CSG members who were unable to attend support group meetings due to treatment, physical condition, and/or emotional issues.

The volunteers paid visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and members' homes. They stayed at the patient's side to hear their latest treatment updates and the unfortunate side effects. The encouragement and support the patient felt during these visits often brought smiles to their faces. In these four years, the volunteers supported 34 cancer patients and their family members. Sadly, a few patients lost their battle

to cancer. However, many have returned to the support group after completing their treatment, and they are so thankful for the CH volunteers' support during their hardship.

Currently, we have two trained volunteers and have just recruited a support member to join the volunteer team. It is always helpful to have a cancer survivor support another cancer patient. They often share the same worries and face the same cancer treatment's side effects. The new cancer patient also finds encouragement by hearing the successful treatment and recovery story from another cancer survivor.

Our Cancer Support Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month, from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Health professionals are also invited to provide medical information and resources to the participants. 🍁

AMBITION Lights the Night with CHANCE and ORIFLAMME

Cameron House's Senior Commission, AMBITION, had a life-altering mission trip to Oregon this summer.

Micah Chu and Foy Chu-White, both CH Alumni who now live in Oregon, welcomed the group and helped them throughout their week-long venture. The youth enjoyed the loving hospitality of the Chu family, Presbyterian Church in Portland, and Menucha (a beautiful hundred-acre Retreat Center located at the Columbia River Gorge). Our young adults kept busy with a variety of community projects: weeding the grounds at Menucha; sorting over eight pallets of food for the Portland Police Bureau's Sunshine Division (which has been giving food and clothing to families in need since 1923); and offering hot coffee, food, and companionship to homeless people during Night Strike.

Every Thursday night in downtown Portland, Night Strike volunteers provide free food, haircuts, shaves, showers, shoes, clothing, and sleeping bags to over 450 homeless people. Just as important, it helps break down the walls of stereotypes as the volunteers learn the names and stories of the people they meet. And our young adults were no different. As they handed out

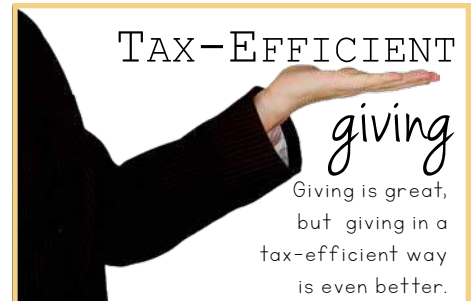
hot drinks and sandwiches, they listened to the stories of the people they met - stories of difficulties, pain, and loneliness. Those encounters touched them profoundly, and when they returned to San Francisco, they decided to start something similar here.

Light the Night is a collaborative program, developed by our AMBITION, CHANCE, and ORIFLAMME Commissions, to reach out to the homeless in our city and help them feel more loved, more known, more human. Their mission is to provide compassion and a listening ear to destitute people who are regularly ignored; to give them care packages of blankets, socks, jackets, food, toothbrushes and toothpaste; to inspire others to reach out in tangible ways to the poor and marginalized in our city; and, through all of this, to reveal love to our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Thank you, AMBITION, CHANCE, and ORIFLAMME, for pioneering this amazing program. May it light many hearts in San Francisco - and grow into a flame.

The next Light the Night is scheduled for November 4th. If you would like to donate new blankets, jackets, socks, toothbrushes and toothpaste, or if you know of any resources where our young adults can purchase sandwich supplies at cost, please contact Michael at LightTheNightCH@gmail.com. Thank you! 🍂



Members of AMBITION, CHANCE, and ORIFLAMME preparing sandwiches for Light the Night



A quick reminder to those 70.5 and older to take your required minimum distribution before year-end to avoid penalties.

Per the IRS, you can distribute up to \$100,000 from your retirement accounts to your favorite charities completely tax free.

Since the amount will be excluded from your gross income, you may be able to avoid surcharges on Medicare Part B & D and reduce the taxes due on your social security income.

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can help in any way. Contact May Leong at may@cameronhouse.org. Your tax adviser is also an excellent resource for more information.



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and if what I was saying was resonating with them. I think also getting them to participate was a little bit challenging, but I didn't expect all of them to want to talk.

What would you say to other Alumni about this experience?

It's always great to give back to the CH programs. There are so many generations of people who have been positively influenced by CH so it's wonderful to come back and contribute to their programs. 🍂



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upcoming events

Coffee House - College/Young Adult Reunion

Cameron House

Friday, November 25

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

The Old with the New - IGNITE Senior Commission Fundraiser

Cameron House

Saturday, December 3

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Join the Senior Commission for a FUNdraiser to help support the Senior's Service & Learning Trip to Orlando, Florida! "The Old with the New" will feature a special program that includes live entertainment, a karaoke room, many raffles to be won, amazing food (and some Cameron Carnival faves for sale!) and a NEXT LEVEL photo booth hosted by Level2 Productions. If you are unable to attend and would like to donate/sponsor a ticket, contact Justin Chu at jyoungc1@gmail.com.

Tickets are on sale now! Cost is \$20; contact Justin Chu at jyoungc1@gmail.com for more information.

You Can Be a Legacy Philanthropist!

Year-End Tax Summary Letters

In an effort to reduce postage costs and conserve resources, we will only be mailing annual donation summary letters by request. If you would like to receive one, please contact Annie at annie@cameronhouse.org or 415-781-0401 x123, and we will gladly send one to you in January 2017. Thank you!

A charitable bequest is a gift made through a will that enables you to leave a legacy and make a significant contribution to the future of Cameron House. Today charitable bequests can also be made through a living trust or a beneficiary designation on a financial account. It costs you nothing to make, yet it can eventually reduce taxes and help benefit your family and Cameron House. By making a bequest to Cameron House, you can leave a wonderful legacy that will continue transforming lives for generations to come. Please call May Leong today about how we might help you: 415.781.0401 x135. Thank you!