

Current



LEAPING FROM SUMMER TO SCHOOL, THEN AND NOW

Cameron House youth compete in the olympics at Westminster Woods, circa 1968 (top) and 2018 (bottom).



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Yo's Two CENTS: BACK TO SCHOOL AND ADJUSTING TO CHANGES

By Interim Executive Director Yulanda Kwong

Summer months have already gone by, and we are in a new academic school year. That means students have been getting ready for their first day back at school. Not only have students been getting ready, but the teachers, parents, guardians, and grandparents have been getting ready as well. Many feelings have been floating around as we were counting the days that led up to the first day of school. Some of us might have felt nervous, scared, uncomfortable, worried, doubtful, excited, happy, and thrilled all mixed together.

Getting back into the routine or a new routine might have been challenging. We might have been thinking about what time we would be getting up in the morning, who our teachers would be for the new school year, which classrooms we would be in, whether our friends would be in the same classes, what

we would be having for lunch, who we would sit with in the cafeteria, how we would navigate a new school environment, where our new lockers would be located, and much more. Of course, some of these thoughts might have been different depending on which grade level you're in.

Many students were probably having these similar thoughts. Anytime we have to make changes or adjustments, we would be impacted physically, mentally, and emotionally. Let's take a deep breath and give us some time to adjust. For example, when we are getting ready to go on a trip, we are excited and might be anxious at the same time. We get to our destination with the different types of transportation we take to get there. Depending on which part of the world we're in, we have to adjust to the time changes and the culture and practices of the place we are visiting. When our mind and body have finally adjusted, we have

to readjust again when we travel back home.

Changes and adjustments might be difficult for some people, and some people might take more time than others to adapt. Let us learn to be patient and open our hearts and minds to understand the changes and situations we are in before we quickly react. Our lives are continuously evolving and changing and sometimes we don't even realize it. Changes could be positive or not so positive. It really depends on how we look at it. Be safe and be healthy.

Our Bilingual After school Program started on August 20 immediately after seven weeks of summer youth programs and six days of youth camp at Westminster Woods. We served over 400 children and youth this summer. If you want to learn more about our youth programs, please visit our website at www.cameronhouse.org/youth-programs.

REV. HARRY CHUCK RECOGNIZED FOR HOUSING ADVOCACY

By Cameron House Staff

This Tuesday, October 30, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) will be awarding Rev. Harry Chuck the Silver SPUR Award in recognition of a lifetime of civic achievement. Throughout the 1970s, Rev. Harry Chuck fought for affordable housing in Chinatown, co-founding the Chinatown

Coalition for Better Housing which resulted in the construction of Mei Lun Yuen, which contains 185 apartments for seniors and families. Rev. Harry Chuck is currently working on compiling his first-hand footage of this tumultuous era into the full-length documentary *Chinatown Rising*, which is expected to be completed in early 2019. In

addition to his time serving as the executive director of Donaldina Cameron House, Rev. Harry Chuck has served ten-year stints at the San Francisco Housing Authority and on the Juvenile Justice Commission. For more information, visit www.spur.org/silverspur and www.goodmedicinefilms.com/chinatown-rising.

SUMMER SNAPSHOTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow [@CameronHouseSF](#) on Facebook and Instagram for regular updates and more summer photos!



Top row: This summer each of our 5th-8th graders went on a camping adventure. The smell and sizzle of dinner draws hungry onlookers (left). As night falls, it's time to gather around a blazing campfire to share s'mores and ghost stories (middle). A group of tent-mates works together as they search for a flat, dry spot to make camp (right).

Middle row: This year 130 youth and adults continued our tradition of fellowship and fun at Westminster Woods. Music filled the week, whether from ukulele jam bands, daily "Singspiration," or solo time on the guitar (left). The annual Olympics tested campers' athletic prowess with events such as the stick jump, water balloon soccer, and the backwards ball kick (middle). A camper fixes her sights on becoming the next Katniss Everdeen, just in case she finds herself in the world of the *Hunger Games*.

Bottom row: With the coming of the school year, our Bilingual Afterschool Program is back in full swing. Here, our hungry students cook (and slurp) up some well-deserved ramen during a study break. A sous-chef demonstrates the proper preparation of green onions (left). With the chopping done, it is time to arrange a harmonious balance of color, shape, and texture (middle). After a long day of school and tutoring, a bowl of ramen brings warmth to the tummy and joy to the soul (right).

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL

By Cameron House Staff

Their passions range from curing Alzheimer's disease to ending racial injustice. This month, 20 promising young people from the Cameron House community are ready to begin their fall term at colleges across the state of California, after having received nearly \$20,000 in scholarship money in June. We caught up with a few of them to learn more about their experiences at school.

Juliana Mak

Juliana Mak is a third-year at UC Davis majoring in Communications with a minor in Sociology. Juliana's interests include staying active in her Christian fellowship, volunteering at local youth-serving organizations, cooking with friends, and sharing stimulating conversations that run late into the night. Here's what Juliana had to say via email.



CH: What has been challenging about moving to a new place?

JM: The biggest challenge has been not seeing my family, since I am really close to them. It was really special that my older sister attended UC Davis with me for my first two years, which reduced the homesickness I felt. My biggest anxiety when leaving home was not knowing if I would have a community at UC Davis, but God was really kind and provided me with a community that I could rely on.

CH: Other than your family, what have you missed while you've been away?

JM: I miss the abundant Asian food! It's a bit disappointing that there's no direct access to dim sum. But it definitely encourages me to cook meals at home and to learn from my family when I'm back in San Francisco.

CH: What do you hope for this year?

JM: I hope to meet new freshmen this year and to pass on knowledge that I've learned in the past two years. I gained a lot from having older mentors in college and I want to be that person for the new class coming in. I also hope to grow a deeper understanding of God not just in my Christian fellowship, but also in my workplace and in my classes.

CH: What do you like most about campus?

JM: I visited the campus when I was still in high school and I disliked how it was so rural! But now, I appreciate the nature because it's so different from the loud city of San Francisco. I've learned to quiet my mind in the nature of Davis.

CH: Do you have any plans to study abroad?

JM: I would love to study or work abroad if my schedule permits. I took five years of Italian in high school and college, and it would be great to visit the country to practice what I've learned. And eat gelato. Lots of gelato.

Jordan Chu

Jordan Chu is a first-year Political Science major at UC San Diego. Jordan has been an active leader in many communities, including

as a summer camp leader, in his Boy Scout troop, and in his school government. He hopes to someday effect changes in the government of the United States that will benefit vulnerable minority groups and improve relations with other nations. He shared some of his thoughts with us over email.



CH: Do you think you'll encounter any challenges adjusting to college life?

JC: I think it'll be hard to establish a new support system of counselors, friends, and peers. And though I think the food will be good, I really hope I don't become another statistic to the freshman fifteen trend. I also feel like I'm going to have that first-month stress of adjusting to campus life and a new daily schedule. But most of all I'm going to miss my parents, since they've been my greatest supporters throughout my whole life. They've always been there to make me laugh and smile.

CH: What experience are you most looking forward to?

JC: I visited UCSD briefly during a college visit, and I love the campus culture and lifestyle. I'm excited to restart and meet new people from different places. I can't wait to experience my first flight back home for winter break, to tell all my family and friends how college has been and to celebrate the holidays back in town.

Mandy Xia

Mandy Xia attends Laney College and is exploring a diverse array of studies including Japanese and Philosophy. At Cameron House, she learned that she had the power to help families and young people thrive. Additionally, her abilities as a bilingual Chinese and English speaker meant she could help others overcome the language barrier and find access to the right resources. We sat down with Mandy and learned more about what the future holds for her.



CH: How has going to college changed you?

MX: A year ago I was really close-minded. I didn't consider community college as a choice, because many of my classmates made it seem shameful. When I didn't get into the schools I wanted, dealing with that rejection was one of my most life-changing experiences. I realized that just because I didn't get what I wanted didn't mean I could give up. I had to keep going. I've had to tell myself that even if my school isn't the most prestigious, my journey still counts and is just as valuable.

CH: What has surprised you about college?

MX: How much I've learned from my classmates. They come from so many different backgrounds and many are much older than me. A lot of them have emigrated from different countries, but what we all have in common is that we want to learn and better ourselves through education. I really like

talking to older people because they have more life experiences. My philosophy professor talks about how he lived through three civil wars in his home country, and it makes me feel so grateful not to live with such struggle in my life. But it's made me think about what people like my mom have risked by coming to America. I really appreciate my classmates, and I hope I've changed their minds in some ways because they've really changed mine.

Nikki Lei

Nikki Lei started her freshman year at UC Davis this September with a major in Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior. She is interested in going to medical school and working to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Having witnessed the toll of these illnesses, she is deeply interested in making them less costly for both patients and their families. We had the opportunity to catch up with her in person as she prepared to head out for college.



CH: What's your impression of the Davis campus?

NL: It felt like a place I can relax and study. While walking around during orientation, I found that one of the quads has hammocks, so I ended up resting in the shade of the trees. However, I think a big change will be moving from the city to a

farm town. Instead of being able to bus everywhere you have to bike or drive, so I'm going to miss the MUNI system, even though it can be unreliable and slow.

CH: Anything you're excited about?

NL: I'm really excited about having a dorm room. I met my dormmate through my best friend, and we've been making lots of plans for our room ever since. We got lucky that it'll just be the two of us because a lot of rooms are triples. So we'll have more space, and we'll have a mini-fridge, microwave, and rice cooker. My sister even gave me a special pan you can use to make lasagna in the microwave! Also, I have all these decorations I've been stockpiling over the past year.

CH: How do you think you'll spend your free time?

NL: I was super excited to learn that there's an archery class and an archery team. I'm going to bring my bow up there because I can shoot at the archery range on my own after class on Tuesdays.

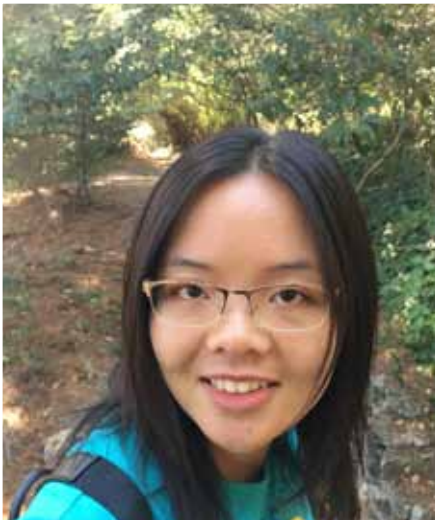
We wish success to not just Juliana, Jordan, Mandy, and Nikki, but all of our young people during this school year. May their educational journeys be filled with new knowledge, may they build lasting friendships, and may they find the support networks they need to navigate the stresses they will encounter. Our deep gratitude goes out to Clovis and Pat Shem, Harold and Gwendolyn Wong, Kenneth and Josephine Kwong, Micah Chu and Dr. Elizabeth White-Chu, Jerry and Beverly Lee, David and Pauline Chan, Mary Lou Tong and the Harry W. Tong Memorial Scholarship, and June Tom of InspirASIAN, all of whom generously provided funds for scholarships that have supported Cameron House youth.

BOTH NEW AND FAMILIAR FACES JOIN THE TEAM

By Cameron House Staff

We are excited to welcome three new members to our team: Computer Class Instructor Lisha Jiang, Counseling Intern Andy Zhou, and Bilingual Afterschool Program Coordinator Oliver Wijayapala. With their help, we are excited to keep providing a diverse array of high-quality programs for our community.

Lisha was born and raised in China and is fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin. Since middle school she has been interested in computers and technology, and is familiar with popular Chinese apps such as WeChat, which has over one billion users despite its relative obscurity in the United States. Lisha's hobbies include staying in shape, reading a good book, and whipping up a delicious home-cooked meal. She is excited to apply her knowledge of computers and the Chinese language to improve people's lives.



Computer Class Instructor Lisha Jiang

With more advanced computer skills, the adults in her class will be able to access to the internet's wealth of information, have fast and easy communication through email, and improve their productivity with

documents and spreadsheets. Andy Zhou is currently in his second year of his Master in Counseling Program at Western Seminary. He splits his time between a data analytics job, evening/weekend classes, and his family, which includes his 5-year-old daughter.



Counseling Intern Andy Zhou

Despite the challenges of juggling these responsibilities, Andy is excited to embark on his internship with Cameron House's counseling team, and strives to help people find healing and more fulfillment in their lives. Andy immigrated to the San Francisco Bay Area from Guangzhou as a teenager, and he feels passionately about serving the immigrant community. In his spare time, he enjoys singing, taking walks, and would love to pick up his past hobbies of hiking and badminton.

A San Francisco native, Oliver started volunteering as a Bilingual Afterschool Program tutor during his senior year of high school. Since then, there are few experiences he hasn't had and few places he hasn't been. He has been a firefighter in Vermont, eaten the best lamb of

his life in Inner Mongolia, and traveled to Shenzhen in search of the perfect haircut. Throughout his adventures, Oliver has always kept a love of language, culture, and community close to his heart.



Bilingual Afterschool Program Coordinator Oliver Wijayapala

Although he can speak many languages (he is fluent in English and Mandarin, and is learning Cantonese Spanish, Tagalog, and Bisaya), Oliver knows that the most important part of communication can be non-verbal and comes directly from the heart. As a first generation college graduate in his family, he has a deep understanding of the value of education, and he hopes to create access to equitable educational experiences in his current role as the Bilingual Afterschool Program Coordinator.

Whether they are teaching computer skills to adults, providing counseling to survivors of domestic violence, or helping immigrant youth with math homework, our staff make magic happen every day. We hope you can join us in welcoming Lisha, Andy, and Oliver to our community!

STAFF EMBARK ON MASTERS STUDIES

By Cameron House Staff

This August, two members of the Youth Ministries team moved on from their roles at Cameron House in order to begin graduate level studies. Former Academic Enrichment Programs Coordinator Andrea Ye is currently pursuing her Masters in Counseling at San Francisco State University, while former Out of School Time Program Director Rene Kamm is working on his Masters of Social Work at UC Berkeley. Andrea



Andrea Ye (left) and Rene Kamm (right)

first came to Cameron House three years ago when she began volunteering as a Club Leader. Even though she is beginning a rigorous course of studies, don't be surprised if you happen to see her leading the 10th grade girls at Friday Night Club. Rene's involvement with Cameron House began three years ago when he started working as a 5th grade teacher for the Bilingual Afterschool Program. Taken together, Rene and Andrea have brought immeasurable love, life, and light to our Youth Ministries programs, and they have touched the lives of hundreds of young people. We hope they bring the same dedication and passion to their studies that they've shared with the youth of Cameron House. While we are sad to see them go, we wish them much success!

BIG GIVE RAISES OVER \$225,000

By Cameron House Staff

Over a two-week period beginning in late August, the Cameron House community raised over \$225,000 during the Big Give (formerly Phone-a-thon). Volunteers and staff reached out to the community with mailers, emails, phone calls, and personal appeals to support Cameron House's diverse array of community-focused programs. The Big Give supplements grants from city government and philanthropic foundations, and helps keep our program fees as low as possible. How much exactly is \$225,000? It's enough money to keep Cameron House fully staffed for 44 days, pay our IT and utility bills for 86 months, or cover our classroom and craft supplies for 30 years!

We are so fortunate to have an alumni community filled with people who understand the importance of providing bilingual social services, mental health support, and youth development programs in San Francisco Chinatown. We would like to give special thanks to the 365 donors who collectively raised over \$100,000, as well as the Eustace-Kwan Family Foundation which provided a matching grant of an additional \$100,000. We would also like to recognize United Parcel Service for their gift of \$25,000, as well as the support they provide at Carnival and Gala. Finally, a thank you to all the volunteers, board members, and staff who put forth their passion to raise this money. Thank you all for keeping crucial social services and youth development accessible to our community in San Francisco Chinatown and beyond.

LEGACY PLANNING

By Keira Chu

Update your will and living trust if there has been a change in your family (births, deaths, or marital status), your work or financial status, or in your charitable interests. If you have not already done so, please consider including Cameron House as a beneficiary in your will by asking your attorney to draft an amendment, called a codicil, to your existing will. You can specify a dollar amount, a particular asset, or a percentage of your estate.

A Silent Prayer

I have been thinking about our ancestors. I often wonder what their lives were like and what they hoped for us.

I hope they would feel pleased to know the labor of their hands has given comfort in our lives: warm beds, full bellies, water clean to drink.

Pleased in knowing instead of growing hard, as they did, we grew hearts.

Hearts big enough to fill the harvest moon and make a home for family both lost and found.

I have been thinking about our ancestors. I hope their spirits serenely rest knowing our fullness.

-Anonymous

Please send poetry submissions to david@cameronhouse.org.



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events

upcoming

Date	Time	Event
Saturday, Sept. 29	3:00pm - 5:00pm	1950s Reunion - Welcoming back all alumni from the 1950s! Light refreshments will be served during a short program.
Friday, Jan. 25	6:30pm - 10:00pm	Ninth Annual Visual and Performing Arts Festival - Watch talented youth showcase their skills in Culbertson Hall!
Saturday, March 2	5:30pm - 10:00pm	Soul and Elegance - Join us for our annual gala dinner at the South San Francisco Conference Center.

STAY IN TOUCH!

Don't forget to update your contact information by visiting our website at www.cameronhouse.org/contact-us/update-my-info or with the QR code to the right. Additionally, if you would like to receive a paper or electronic annual donation summary, please contact Annie Luu at annie@cameronhouse.org or (415) 781-0401 ext. 123.

