

# Current



Captions on bottom of page 2

**SOUL** AUTHENTIC VOICES  
**ELEGANCE**



## From the Executive Director

Looking back, who would've imagined? We'd just hosted several Christmas celebrations for our volunteers, social service clients and staff, as well as our annual Visual and Performing Arts Festival. We bid farewell to staff who moved on to new inspired roles and welcomed new staff and board members. We hosted our annual Soul & Elegance gala that honored the Authentic Voices of Evan Jackson Leong, The Friends of Cameron House, and Dorothy "Polka Dot" G. Chow Quock.

Our Legacy Committee planned an Estate and Planned Giving workshop for April; we welcomed our next class of the United Parcel Service Community Immersion Program; we staged an engaging board and senior management staff retreat; and preparations were well underway for our 72<sup>nd</sup> annual Carnival event.

So like your world, our world at Cameron House and the community we serve has been severely disrupted by the coronavirus. Cameron House – usually a place bustling with the sounds of joyous learning and conversation and the smells of home-prepared Chinese food – transitioned into one of silence and darkness. Our routines, our work, our social lives and so many things that anchor us are now left suspended in time, without precedent.

Our senior management staff met this new reality with swift, decisive action, almost overnight. We suspended after school and youth programs, events and support group activities not deemed essential. And we cancelled Carnival, our annual May event, to heed the ban on large public gatherings.

However our staff and volunteer teams continue to provide essential services for our most vulnerable: our food pantry serves more than 200 food insecure families and our counseling and case management team serves 90 active clients by phone in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and English. Other than a few key staff to perform essential business functions at Cameron House on weekdays, all staff are working remotely with modified assignments.

Our social service and youth ministry teams report that sheltering in place is especially challenging for our most vulnerable: cabin fever puts people at a deeper risk for domestic violence; low-income families and their school-aged children with little or no access to technology are trapped in a widening educational equity gap; and our elderly, most vulnerable to this virus, are often isolated and with meager support.

While we monitor and heed the directives and guidelines of our government and public health officials, our senior management team is also working closely with our City and County partners, legislators, private foundations, neighborhood centers and programmatic collaborators to address the myriad of systems-wide challenges of serving our citizenry and our most vulnerable. Our senior management team is engaged in scenario planning to ensure our financial sustainability, support our employees and serve our community, while examining how the \$2 Trillion CARES Act might alleviate the strains on Cameron House.

With this disruption comes uncertainty and with it we hear the broader community's loud voices about the critical issues of homelessness; food insecurity; the health and social isolation and loneliness of our elderly; the trauma and stresses affiliated with poverty and immigrants; xenophobia and racism; and the challenges of fostering healthy, functioning families.

This moment is a critical opportunity for learning and for seeing the acutely changing world differently. It is also a time for reimagining what will come of a new economic and social order and how Cameron House can emerge from this process renewed and serving the broader community more deeply and perhaps delivering greater value in new and different ways.

Lent is a time Christians embrace for giving up things and making sacrifices – and it is also a time of contemplation, of preparation and reimagination. "Metanoia", in the Christian Lenten context, has to do with repentance but it also means engaging in a change of mind and heart: how we reorient our lives to be more generous, more faithful, more trusting, more open and more loving.

So this Lenten season we are invited to make sacrifices and do charitable, good works and to accept the invitation to reimagine a future that's brighter, more compassionate, more impactful than before. Disruption favors those with the capacity for creativity, agility and entrepreneurship; opportunity favors the prepared.

This is a moment of strategic opportunity for Cameron House to leverage our assets, strengths, capacity, and time for bold, courageous action.

- Michael Lee



First Baptist Church in America in Providence, R.I. on March 24, 2020 | William J. Kole—AP

## Meet Our New Staff and Board Members!



### CHARLIE RUAN

Computer Assistant and Women's Support Group Children's Activities Leader

My name is Charlie and I am joining the Cameron House's staff! I'm excited to be working here. Cameron House has always been an important part of my life. It takes a community to raise a child, and Cameron House was the community that raised me to become the person I am today. The first memory I have with Cameron House was participating in the Afterschool Program in first grade. Going to Redding Elementary School, I was mostly around people of other ethnicities. I remember being so surprised to see so many Asian people in the afterschool program. It brought me closer to my roots and a better understanding of my family background. I look forward to working with everyone!



### BARBARA FONG

Board Member

I am a San Francisco native who graduated from Washington High School (go Eagles!), SFSU with a degree in biology, and UCSF with a Masters in Physical Therapy. I was an active CH participant for three pivotal years. I participated in the Friday Night Club program during my senior year and was also a summer camp leader. I was in the college age Agape fellowship group (led by Harry Chuck) for a couple of years and was a Club commission advisor.

Afterward, I worked at an acute care hospital in SF for several years before starting my own Physical Therapy practice. I married Mark Fong, who is also an alumnus of the CH program. We have three children, Neal, Mari, and Rene. We're all members of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, where I have been on the Board of Deacons and on the PCC Nominating Committee.

All our kids participated in the CH youth programs, which drew Mark and me back. For the past few years, I co-chaired the Carnival Bakery and the Soul & Elegance Dessert Dash. Now that I am retired, I am very happy to be serving on the Board. It is a wonderful opportunity to express my faith through action, and give back to a community that has provided so much to so many. I am looking forward to working with Mike Lee, our new Executive Director, with the CH staff, and with my fellow Board members.



### DONNA LEE

Chinese Cancer Support Group and Events Coordinator

Donna, born and raised in Guangzhou, China, graduated in Computer Science from CSU Chico. After graduation, she conducted testing/experimenting the first professional Chinese computer software system in the US. After the software system was perfect and launched to the market, Donna established her own business, specializing in Chinese and English translation, word processing and typesetting. Later, she worked for the client's translation company as an interpreter. A few years later worked as a medical interpreter for hospitals for 20 plus years. Through many years of work, she has met many patients and many of them became life-long friends. Due to the development of new technology, her position was eliminated last year. In the past few years, she's also taken care of her mother in all aspects, which has given her a rich experience of caring.

Donna joined the family of Cameron House in December 2019 and continues to serve the Chinese community. Her job now is responsible for the Chinese Cancer Support Group activities. Donna looks forward to serving her future clients with her own experiences, knowledge and personal expertise.



### MARY LAM

Board Member

Growing up near San Francisco's Chinatown, Mary recalls carrying groceries for her mother, attending Chinese language school and hanging out at North Beach Playground. Later on, she married and raised three children in the community. For Mary, the cacophony of Chinese dialects on a busy Stockton Street morning feels like home. After earning a Master's degree in Social Work, Mary worked for an outpatient mental health clinic serving Asian monolingual clients suffering from psychiatric illness along with trauma, poverty, loss and separation.

Throughout her nearly 30 years at the clinic, Mary found an invaluable resource in Cameron House's Social Service Programs and often referred clients who needed help. Last year, Mary's respect for Cameron House deepened after she joined a committee at Cameron House and had the opportunity to work closely with individuals who were passionate about faith and social justice. She is excited to be a part of an organization that has been practicing faith in action throughout the years. Recently retired, Mary is on active duty as a grandmother with a very active grandson. Martial Arts movies and CAL sports are her not so secret obsessions.

### Captions from Front Page

Top Left: Friends of Cameron House (FoCH) accept a Donaldina Cameron Award in the form of a hand painted scroll by Ben Wong with 18 butterflies representing each of the members of FoCH

Bottom Left: Evan Jackson Leong receives a Donaldina Cameron Award scroll with an arowana fish

Top Right: Dorothy "Polka Dot" Quock accepts a Donaldina Cameron Award from our Executive Director, Michael Lee, and Board President, Scott Barlow

Center: The Senior Commission, Ripple, was a huge help throughout the night running Fund Our Need envelopes as well as capturing many fun memories at their photobooth

Bottom Center: The Rev. Gregory L. Chan rings the ceremonial gong to initiate our Fund Our Needs program

Bottom Right: Attendees bust a move on the dance-floor, line dancing included!

Photos by Stuart Go

The Cameron House Planned Giving/Legacy Committee  
is pleased to announce its next workshop

## The Tail of the (Charitable) Dog: Tax and Control Considerations in Planned Giving, and Other Estate Planning Thoughts

This workshop will educate people about the value of planned giving and to share tax planning and tax saving strategies. Guest speakers, Jeff Tachiki and Anne Rhodes, will cover various topics including the current gift and estate tax landscape; core estate planning strategies including wills, revocable trusts, and powers of attorney; as well as tax planning strategies including charitable techniques.



Anne Rhodes advises on estate planning and has specific experience with cross-border estate planning, wealth transfer and U.S. tax compliance for clients with global investments and assets, particularly in Asia. In addition to drafting succession planning documents, such as wills and trust agreements, she has counseled clients on U.S. inbound pre-immigration, passive foreign investment companies and controlled foreign corporations, European usufruct rights, Section 367(a) gain recognition agreements and compliance with the Common Reporting Standard in various jurisdictions. She also drafted an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) comment letter on proposed regulations, as well as memoranda and opinions on various complex tax issues. Outside of her legal practice, Anne has spent the last few years providing college admissions counseling and financial literacy advice to low-income high school students.



Jeff Tachiki guides clients through the complex issues that arise in estate planning, and during trust administration and probate, including disputed matters. Jeff has particular knowledge of California's nonconforming trust and estate law, specifically the elements relevant to trust and estate administration, and is a certified specialist with the State Bar of California in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law. His trust administration work includes experience addressing cross-border issues, and he has dealt with multiple jurisdictions when working through the estate tax issues related to probate administrations. Jeff is also very active in the Bay Area legal community. He serves as chair of the Estate Planning and Administration Committee for the East Bay Trusts and Estates Lawyers (EBTEL) and is a member of the Judicial Appointment Evaluation Committee for the Alameda County Bar Association.

This is the second workshop of the series of twice per year offerings. Last autumn 25 people participated in a workshop, "Family Record Inventory". Participants received a binder of forms to identify their critical financial and personal information all in one easy to access place for their family and relatives to use in case of emergency. Examples of key information include: People to Notify, Banking and Investing account info, Insurance info, Tangible assets, and Location of Documents.

**With the threat of Covid-19, we have postponed this estate tax planning, wills and trusts workshop and will reschedule when it is safe to do so.**

*Welcome to*

**CANCELED CANCELED CANCELED CANCELED CANCELED**

**Cameron Carnival**


Cameron Carnival, normally occurring the first Saturday of May, has been **CANCELLED** this year due to health concerns over the spread of Covid-19.

For more Cameron House program updates due to the coronavirus, visit our website at [cameronhouse.org/news/covid-19-updates/](https://cameronhouse.org/news/covid-19-updates/)

We are still operating!

Every Thursday we distribute food to more than 200 low-income people and families in Chinatown. Food Pantry is seen as an essential service and will continue to operate on site every Thursday until further notice.

### How much food has our pantry distributed in 2020?

	January .....	23,026.62 lbs	
	February.....	18,111.1 lbs	
	March.....	20,728.4 lbs	

For a total of 61,866.12 pounds of food!

And the year has only just begun!

If you would like to help out with food pantry and are not part of a vulnerable community (older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions) please contact Nolan Chow at [nolan@cameronhouse.org](mailto:nolan@cameronhouse.org)

Masks and gloves will be provided upon request.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Meet **EMMY LI** Friday Night Club Senior Commission Leader



### How did you first get involved with Cameron House?

I've known about Cameron House for a long time since I grew up in Chinatown but I was never fully involved in any of the programs. I first got involved with Friday Night Club when I went to Westminster Woods in 2017. It was my first time going to West and I saw that Cameron House was a really warm and big community. I noticed that everyone was friends with each other. My week at camp was fun and I got to meet some cool new people. I decided that I wanted to be a part of the community and went on to be a Youth Development Leader (YDL) ever since!

### What kept you coming back?

I keep coming back because of the youth and other YDLs. In the beginning, I was still figuring out what being a YDL meant. As I spent more time with the youth, I realized that we were forming a very precious relationship, one that will always last. Meeting other YDLs has also been a highlight. We share club experiences with each other and also bond outside of Friday Night Club. Cameron House has provided a space for me to grow and develop new relationships.

### Do you have a favorite memory/memories from Club?

There are a lot of fun and awesome memories but one that comes to mind would be Carnival. It is one of my favorite memories because we all work hard on our concession and we see it come to life on Carnival day. There are different games and activities at Carnival that make it a fun and exciting time. It is busy throughout the day but the joy that we see from others makes it worth it. It is a fun and awesome event in which we get to provide something for our community.

### What do you like to do with your free time?

I enjoy playing volleyball, I will always be down to play. I only play during the summer and not all year round because of time and the availability of others. I also like to go eat, I like to go eat different types of food with friends and family because food is great! Dessert is also something I can't live without, I'll always have room for it. Hiking, going to the beach/somewhere with a view, or anything with nature is really calming. I also want to travel more in the future when I have time, there is so much to experience when one is in a new place!

### What are you studying? What's after club for you?

I am currently studying Psychology with the end goal of becoming a nurse. I will be transferring this upcoming Fall to a University. I still have a few more years of school left but I have a lot that I want to do. I want to experience a lot more in the future, whether that be riding in a hot air balloon, running a marathon, moving to a different place, traveling, and much more.

### Anything else you'd like the community to know?

I hope that the state we're in will pass and that things will turn better. I am truly treasuring the time that I get to spend with my loved ones right now. We will get through this!

## 2020 UNITED PARCEL SERVICE COMMUNITY IMMERSION PROGRAM

In partnership with UPS, Cameron House hosted its 16th cohort of UPS executives for 19 days from January into February. Led by Cameron House alumni, Josh Chuck, these executives received an opportunity to experience the many different communities of San Francisco. With visits to non-profits in Chinatown, the Tenderloin, and Bayview/Hunter's Point, some of the participants share their personal experiences:



**TOM  
MCQUEENEY**  
Director of  
Engineering  
Pittsburgh,  
Pennsylvania

*What were your favorite experiences here in San Francisco?*

**TM:** Well, favorite experiences... I'll say most impactful so there's a difference right so favorite experiences are like, "I had a great time, yay!" But Impactful is like, "Wow that really broke my heart." Part of my favorite experiences was working with the kids here at Cameron House, that was pretty cool. That was uplifting, very, very uplifting. From the opposite side, working down at Saint Anthony's in their dining room serving people, it breaks your heart. You know those are grandparents, those are somebody's brothers or sisters, that are out of a home and don't have enough to eat. That was very, very impactful. Then finally going to San Quentin and talking with the folks and learning that a 15-year-old made one mistake and he's got 150 years to life sitting in a jail cell and it's sad that one mistake, although a bad mistake, as somebody's son... It's pretty emotional.

*Anything else you'd like to say about your time here?*

**TM:** I can say that, Cameron House, I really, really like this building, love the people here, love Josh, he did a fantastic job, he claims he doesn't do as good of a job as his dad does but he's wrong, he does a really great job.



**JESSICA  
GRIMES**  
Director of  
Marketing  
Atlanta, Georgia

*How would you describe your volunteer experience here at Cameron House?*

**JG:** I would describe it as life-changing for me, I think what I observed at Cameron House was really special. The fact that CH has been a safe place for the community to come for almost 150 years is really astounding. Also the fact that this place has changed and evolved to meet the needs that people are bringing so many times is so amazing, I'm excited to see what the future holds for this place as the world continues to change. I think the values that CH brings to meeting those changes will shape the future of CH in a way that I'm excited to see.

*How would you describe your experience in San Francisco overall?*

**JG:** San Francisco is great. I love it here, I mean the weather, it took a while to get used to the hills, my legs were sore. I'm originally from Atlanta, so it's very flat. But SF is truly amazing, a lot of diversity of thought, diversity of values, and yet you guys all make it work.

*Any highlights?*

**JG:** Actually the (Chinese New Year) parade I'd say was a nice highlight, just to see all of the organizations come out you know, it was a little bit of organized chaos.



**LI YU**  
Director of Solutions  
and Engineering  
Asia-Pacific Region

*Can you tell me about your time here at Cameron House?*

**LY:** I got deeply involved, at least in my mind, with the BAP program, and also the Kitchen Medicine program and some of the activities hosted for young adults (Friday Night Club). The most important thing is not just to be involved but also to be aware of an understanding of why we're doing this. I think this is the key for a lot of the social issues that we don't tackle proactively; it will become a bigger issue. What Cameron House is doing, their being involved with young children and young adults, they're making sure they're on the right track. That to me has a tremendous amount of impact to everybody in this community to act on things at an early stage, to making sure everyone is taken care of, making sure nobody's isolated, making sure that we're looking after each other, that's pretty much what I learned from my three weeks here.

**Thank you  
for your service,  
UPS!**



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## Farewell to Staff!



Anson Ho left Cameron House in December. Anson grew up going to Friday Night Club and went on to become the Friday Night Club Director, Youth Leadership Development Programs Coordinator in the Fall of 2017 and later the Youth Leadership Development Programs Director. He is now pursuing his career in film.

Cody Friesenborg-Lee left Cameron House in January. Cody started at Cameron House as a summer camp leader for Solid Ground in 2007. She went on to become the Out of School Time Director and Volunteer and Special Events Manager, Communications & Community Outreach Coordinator, and then later the Associate Director as well as the Development Director. Cody now works at Wah Mei School as the Director of Extended Learning.



David Pon left Cameron House in February. David started at Cameron House in 2018 as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator. He is now working as a Program Associate for the environmental non-profit, Youth Outside, in Oakland.