

# OCA San Mateo County Chapter

Embracing the hopes and aspirations of Chinese and Asian Pacific Americans

San Mateo County Chapter P.O. Box 218 San Mateo, CA 94401

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## President's Message by Chris Bush

Greetings – I would like to thank Melodie Lew, our past president for her strong leadership on core issues and the fantastic job she has done keeping our chapter active and engaged. I look forward to her help and continued support.

Our Holiday Party at Poplar Creek and New Year's Party at the Grand Seafood Palace were festive and provided wonderful opportunities to meet new friends and reconnect with old acquaintances.

Dr. David Chai recently completed his 13<sup>th</sup> year leading OCA's hallmark Speak & Lead Program. He and Ivan Temes led two classes at the Foster City Recreation Center once again this year. We will greatly miss David's commitment to the program, but more importantly his commitment to the growth of all those lucky enough to work with him. He and his wife, Audrey, relocated and he will no longer be leading Speak & Lead for OCA. Thank you David! Your last graduating class was simply terrific!

Along with JACL, we recently awarded scholarships to 8 worthy San Mateo County high school seniors. Food from Crouching Tiger, Redwood City, speeches from the winners and a keynote from Brad Okamoto on his path to a successful career were the highlights of this annual event.

Our next chapter event will be the summer picnic at Beresford Park on August 13, Sunday. Beresford Park is a beautiful location for our annual OCA summer picnic. Located in San Mateo at 2720 Alameda de las Pulgas, it's home to the city's only community garden as well as the San Mateo Garden Center. It's a perfect place to gather for our August 13<sup>th</sup> feast. We're happy to provide the picnic faire, but we're looking for volunteers to help. Email [chrisbush2@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisbush2@yahoo.com) to get involved. Or, just come to the picnic and enjoy the sun, food and friends before summer is over and school starts again.

Congratulations again to the Speak & Lead winners and the graduating seniors, I wish them well and hope they enjoy their summer with friends and family.

Chris Bush

# SMOCA Welcomes 2017 with Lunar Year Dinner Gala

By Intern Emily Xu

On Saturday, February 4th, the San Mateo OCA Chapter celebrated the Lunar New Year with a gala at the Grand Seafood Palace in South San Francisco.

The interns arrived at 5:30pm to help with the preparation -- checking guests in, directing them to their respective tables, and handing out their name badges. The tables were numbered 1-8 with the number 4 being skipped due to its unluckiness in the Chinese culture. Overall, around 50-60 guests attended the gala.

Once all the guests have arrived, San Mateo OCA President Chris Bush began her opening speech, recognizing important guests and wishing everyone a happy Chinese New Year.

After Bush's speech, the dishes began to arrive one by one. Peking duck, Broccoli Beef, Cashew Nut Prawns, Chow Mein, and Chow Fan were only to name some of the dishes served. Drink variety was also present. Guests had the option of choosing sprite, ginger ale, coke, tea, and/or water as their choice of beverage.



Guests mingle as they wait for dinner to be served.

Overall, the atmosphere was very positive, and guests conversed about a variety of topics among themselves. Topics included but were not limited to: politics, college, jobs, programs, and what people were generally up to.

In response to this event, guests Aimee Yan and Billy Chow said, "We had a great conversation at our table. Food was plentiful and delicious. Wonderful OCA tradition to celebrate our cultural heritage."

Director David Chai and his wife, Audrey Chai agreed, "Really enjoyed our conversations. We need help to recruit more young people to join us."

"It's always great to bring everyone together and to reconnect, especially after the holidays," Redwood City Council Member Jeff Gee concludes. "The Lunar Year dinner gives us a chance to start the new year, and launch out upcoming events and initiatives."



Right to left: Raymond Tong, David Chai, Audrey Chai, Aimee Yan and Billy Chow

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# OCA San Mateo closes year with holiday party

By Intern Julia Qiao

The OCA San Mateo Chapter held its annual holiday party on November 20 at the Poplar Creek Grill. The lively party featured many speakers, most notably Connie Yung Yu, and wonderful food.



Located near Coyote Point, the venue offered a great scenery to complement the meal. As guests got settled and dinner was served, members mingled and read more about Chinese American contributions to the Transcontinental Railroad during the late 1800s. Among the guests were former mayor of Redwood City, Jeffrey Gee, and Chapter President of OCA Sacramento, Greg Jung, who gave a brief talk about the work OCA has done, as well as upcoming OCA events.

Guest speaker Connie Yung Yu, who is a well-known writer, historian and lecturer, gave an impassioned talk about the forgotten work of Chinese Americans in building the famed Transcontinental Railroad.

With her panels of information, Ms. Yu described her battle in telling the Chinese American railroad workers' stories.

As she recounted the countless hardships and sacrifices these workers encountered, she noted that there still is a lot more work to be done in recognizing their contribution. In fact, it was not until 2014 when the United States Department of Labor inducted the Chinese Railroad Workers into the Labor Hall of Honor, something that Ms. Yu was instrumental in leading. She ended her talk by reminding the audience of the struggles Asian Americans have gone through to be heard and recognized, urging the audience to not let themselves be silenced and continue to stand up for their rights.

Continuing Ms. Yu's message of advocating for Chinese American rights, Speak and Lead president, Dr. David Chai took the stage and discussed his program, the OCA San Mateo's Speak and Lead with Pride. Dr. Chai discussed the work of his organization and their impact within the Asian American community in San Mateo County high schools.



He again emphasized the importance of empowering the Chinese American community to speak out and lead with conviction and pride. The event concluded with a speech from former OCA San Mateo Chapter President Melodie Lew.



# SMOCA ends year with its 29th Annual Gala and Fundraiser

By Intern Emily Xu



4/30/17 OCA-SM 29th Annual Awards Gala.....Frank Jang

On Sunday, April 30th, San Mateo OCA hosted its 29th Gala and Fundraiser at Oyster Point, hoping to raise funds for programs such as OCA's Speak and Lead program and internship program.

The Gala began at approximately 5pm, and as guests began to trail in, the interns, Julia Qiao and Emily Xu, handed out nametags, registered guests, received payments, and distributed raffle tickets.

Before the food was served, guests took pictures up at the front of the stage. Then, once everyone settled down, the emcees, Redwood City Councilmember, Jeff Gee, and ABC7 News Reporter David Louie, were introduced.

Afterwards, the guests were entertained by various performances by the Grand Avenue Follies, who are pictured above, which included but not limited to hula dancing, singing, tap dancing, etc.

Then, when the food was ready, guests



4/30/17 OCA-SM 29th Annual Awards Gala.....Frank Jang

## SMOCA ends year with its 29th Annual Gala and Fundraiser (continued)



were called up to buffet line table by table. There were chicken, rice, fruits and vegetables, and various cake types ready. Later, at approximately eight, silent auctioning and the first round of raffling began.

Most of the prizes were generously donated by the guests and hosts. For the raffle, there were books, t shirts, headphones, speakers, foodstuffs, gift baskets, and the like. For the silent auction items, there were paintings, gift

baskets, necklaces, etc.

After the raffle, the awards ceremony began, with Hang Le To, Tamiko Wong, and the Chi-Am Circle Club as the honorees. After each honoree gave their heartwarming acceptance speeches, the second round of raffling begun and the silent auction winners were announced.

As the event neared its end, the emcees told the guests to check the bottom of their coffee cups. At each table, there was only one cup with a blue label on the bottom, and the individual who sat on the seat with the label cup got to keep the fan ornaments placed on each of the tables.

The event concluded with Chris Bush, the San Mateo OCA President, giving Mayor Gee and ABC7 News Reporter Louie their gifts as a token of appreciation for doing a wonderful job in emceeing the event.





# San Mateo-Foster City Board member Audrey Ng speaks about minority representation

By Intern Julia Qiao

San Mateo-Foster City School District Board of Trustees member Audrey Ng never thought she would seek an elected position. She was happy with just volunteering at her child's school and serving in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). But as the county's schools faced a crisis dealing with overcrowding in the schools, she knew someone had to step up and address the issue.

Initially, Ng was reluctant to run for a position as she did not have the experience nor interest in serving as an elected official. In fact, she tried persuading others to run for the position, but after someone pushed her to run, Ng started to consider the idea.

"No one would step up, so finally I did," Ng says.

Five and a half years later, Ng reflects on her time as an elected official and how that has affected her perspective in life.

"As a trustee, you look at the district as a whole," Ng says. "A lot of times, parents are coming from one particular school, and there is one particular program they want to save. But we have to look at the programs for elementary and middle schools, what programs support all the students, and which decision will help all the kids. It's not just your own kids' classroom, your own little group. It's a broader perspective."

While Ng joined the school board with a goal of addressing overcrowding, she soon realized that she had another purpose. She found that her presence as an Asian American woman allowed her to better connect with the minority community and serve as a model for the younger generation interested in public service.

"Part of it is that people can come and talk to me... because they feel like I can understand," she explains. "They feel comfortable to talk to me, because they feel like they can identify with me, like they won't be brushed aside. I think part of it is being visible and showing people that, yes, you can do it too."

To Ng, the lack of minorities serving as elected officials is a troubling reminder of how much work must still be done. She notes that the lack of representation in certain fields discourages younger generations to pursue those career options, especially when it comes to politics.

"A lot of times, Asian Americans, or any other minority groups, we don't think about this [politics]," Ng says. "It's not something we see, you look at the people elected and that's not you."



## Board member Audrey Ng speaks about representation (continued)



"If you don't see an Asian American woman up there, you don't even think of doing it, you don't even conceive of doing it. I remember talking to someone in college, [and] she was saying that she never thought she could even become a postman. She never even thought that was a job option for her, because it was called a postman. Back in the day, it was called policeman, now it's police officer, or fireman, now firefighter. She just didn't think those were options for her."

She warns that until the younger generations see these role models in elected positions, they will continue to believe that these careers are not attainable.

"Maybe they are not consciously thinking about it, but it does impact your thinking," she says. "And if you aren't seeing certain cultures and certain people up there elected, you are not going to even think, 'Oh I can do that.'"

She urges more minorities to run for elected positions, especially when looking at the disproportionate amount of minorities in office compared to the Bay Area's demographic.

"In our area, we have the capacity to elect more minorities, whether it is Hispanics or Asians, just because of our population," Ng says. "California as whole has an opportunity to elect more minorities. In other places, it might be harder."

However, she notes that it can be hard for people to leave behind their jobs and pursue a career in politics. Ng, herself, works part-time as a Market Performance Analyst for NemoMedia. She says that the first step to better representation starts with local governments, then gradually progress to higher levels of government.

"Take smaller steps to move on," she says. "Become more involved. You don't have to go through elected positions, there are various groups in the city council or in the school district where you can volunteer and get involved. That way, you get to know who is in charge."

She points to various volunteer positions within the school districts, such as the Bond Oversight Committee and Overview Expenditures Committee or local government's review committees.

Ultimately, she encourages people to just "be involved, speak up, find your voice. And if you see others being mistreated, find ways to help. You don't have to be the one banging the drum, but either help them or give them courage to approach HR or to speak up to the manager."

"I think we all have a voice, and we can do something about it," Ng remarks.

# Speak and Lead ends on a strong note

By Intern Emily Xu



On March 16th, San Mateo OCA hosted its annual Speak and Lead Graduation and Speech Contest Celebration at the San Mateo Senior Center, with Freshmen Albert Hao from Aragon High School delivering the winning speech.

This year, the selected topic was: “The United States is a country of immigrants, yet throughout her history, immigrants from certain countries or regions have been excluded. Is the current targeting of immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries or targeted deportation of certain groups of people different from the previous exclusions? What long term-effect might this exclusion have on our country and our way of life as we know it today?”

Speak and Lead is a six-week program sponsored by the San Mateo OCA designed to help high school students of Asian descent build their public speaking skills. After students are accepted into the program, they are split into two classes, one led by Director David Chai, and the other led by Ivan Temes. Every week on Saturday, the students meet up at the Foster City Recreation Center for two hours to give practice speeches on selected topics to their respective classes. They receive personalized feedback from the instructors and classmates in addition to a weekly lecture from the instructors. During the last week of the program, third party judges then select the top two speeches on the last topic for each class. These semi-finalists then proceed to the final competition where the two classes merge and same speeches would be judged again, but this time in front of parents, students, and new judges.



# Speak and Lead ends on a strong note

By Intern Emily Xu

The three judges for this year's competition were Redwood City Councilman Jeff Gee, Foster City Councilman Gary Pollard, and CSM Professor Kate Motoyama. Each judge has a rubric to score each speaker on, the main categories of the rubric being organization, use of body language, use of voice, and connection with the audience.

The competition began approximately at around 6:30, starting off with Aragon Freshmen Ankur Mathur as the first speaker. Mathur was then followed by Aragon Freshmen Albert Hao, then by Aragon Sophomore Koby Lieu, and finally by Sequoia Freshman Miya Hirano. After each speech, each judge scored each speaker on the spot, in addition to giving them live feedback.

After the final speech by Hirano was given, Director Chai was given recognition for his hard work and State Senator Jerry Hill delivered the Keynote speech. In the end, once the rubric scores had been added up, it was announced that Albert Hao was the winner.

At the conclusion of this ceremony, monetary awards were given to each finalists, and recognition certificates were given to all other Speak and Lead students for completing the program.



# OCA San Mateo awards high school students at scholarship luncheon

By Intern Emily Xu



On Saturday, May 7th San Mateo OCA and JACL hosted its annual Scholarship Recognition Luncheon to award and recognize its high school scholarship recipients. This year, there were five types of scholarships awarded at the ceremony -- the JACL scholarship, the Adrian and Monica Arima Scholarship, the Philip and Louise Scholarships, the Ginger Lew Scholarship, and the San Mateo OCA Scholarship. Some scholarships were based on financial need, and some were solely based off of merit and the quality of the applicant's essay.

Raymond Tong, who was a previous Speak and Lead winner, and Andres Soohoo, who was a previous Scholarship recipient, were asked to be the readers and graders of the applicant essays for this year.

"It was such an inspiring opportunity to see such pure passion coming from some of the younger folk of the community," says Tong.

"It was a great refresher of my own drive as well," he adds.

Before the start of the ceremony, name tags were given out, guests were registered, and food was served. The menu consisted of chow mein, salad, rice, and fruit punch.

After everyone settled down, Mary Jo Arcarese of JACL and Bradley Okomoto, who was a past scholarship recipient, began the opening speeches.

This year, high school students from five schools --Hillsdale, Aragon, South San Francisco, and Mills-- were recognized. Lee T. Osaki from Hillsdale high school, was selected for the JACL scholarship; William Satyadi was selected for the Adrian and Monica Arima Scholarship; Marcus Chan of Hillsdale High School was recognized for the Ginger Lew Memorial Scholarship, Michael Chang of Mills High School was recognized for the San Mateo OCA scholarship, and Keliana Hui, Raymond Lin, Nancy Yep of South San Francisco High School and Lynn Jiao and Maggie Zhang of Aragon High School was recognized for the Philip and Louise Wang Scholarships.

When the ceremony began, OCA member Franklin Kang introduced each recipient as they went up the stage to retrieve their awards. Recognitions were handed out by San Mateo County Supervisor Carole Groom and San Mateo OCA President Chris Bush. Each recipient also gave short two-minute acceptance speech thanking their family and friends, OCA and JACL for the scholarship, and to talk about their future aspirations, the college they're going to, their selected major.

After all speeches were finished, Bush gave the closing remarks and cake was served.



## Board, Chair and Committee Information

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