TO UNDERSTAND, ASK FOR THEIR STORY

“I’ve learned how to show empathy and be compassionate to others, and that in order to understand someone’s situation, you have to ask for their story. My biggest highlight is spending time with my family from Cameron House’s Solid Ground Program.” —Jesse L.

“I have learned that family in Cameron House are the ones who I love the most, and they are the ones who I can go back to, and I’m happy to call them my family.” —Jeffry N.

“I felt like I could turn my weaknesses into strengths because the group was like my anchor, reminding me that I could do this, and that they’d push me back on my feet if I fell down.” —Kelly C.

MY ANCHOR

“Valuable seeds of acceptance, support, and safety are planted in the hearts of the children and adults who walk through our doors seeking assistance. Those seeds are nurtured with abundant love, time, and attention—oftentimes helping to draw them to safety—so that each person can bloom and thrive.” —Mary P.

VALUABLE SEEDS ARE PLANTED & NURTURED
"Cameron House serves as a beacon for those who dream to improve their lives and to do something good in the world."

— Jeanne Quan-Linden, Cameron House Alumna

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

We have the unique privilege of working with an amazing, dedicated, and passionate team of Board, staff, volunteers, community partners, and supporters, like you, who help us continue the rich tradition of making Donaldina Cameron House a safe, welcoming place. At Cameron House, people of all ages come to receive help, gain skills, find friends and fellowship, and participate in service to God and others.

This beautiful annual report has been made possible thanks to a grant from the Tagroot Foundation, which provided a team of talented volunteers to collaborate with Cameron House staff on illustrating some of the details of "A Year in the Life of Cameron House" and how we make life better for many youth, individuals, and families in need of essential services.

According to a 2014 API Council report, the Asian and Pacific Islander population is the city’s largest and fastest growing racial group; it is also the largest minority group affected by poverty. More than 35% of San Franciscans living below the poverty line are Asian/Pacific Islander. Other studies indicate that, compared to other San Francisco neighborhoods, Chinatown residents have the highest poverty rate, the second-highest unemployment rate, and the largest language barrier. With high-school graduation rates of 47%, many residents are unskilled laborers and earn as little as 50% of the minimum wage. Given these conditions, residents—even entire families—frequently live in SROs (single-occupancy units) roughly the size of a jail cell. They share a common bathroom and kitchen with everyone on their floor. And because SROs are considered hotels, residents don’t have individual mailboxes, so oftentimes their mail is stolen. Living in cramped conditions: there are few public parks and open spaces available in Chinatown—exacerbates the stress, anxiety, and depression many residents face.

It’s easy to see how the Cameron House wrap-around service model is needed now more than ever. Our programs address the full spectrum of needs for each person’s situation, providing the culturally and linguistically appropriate services, resources, and support needed to make a pivotal difference at a challenging time. Because of donors like you, our community’s residents have opportunities for a healthier and happier life. On behalf of the Cameron House community, we thank you; without your support, none of this would be possible.

May Leong
Executive Director

Thomas Pong
Board President

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1Asian and Pacific Islander Health and Wellness: A San Francisco Neighborhood Analysis, API Council, May 2014
2San Francisco’s Chinatown, Resilience in the Face of Poverty and Homelessness, The Elinorworks Foundation, 2015
3http://www.archives.com/san-francisco-california/chinatown/education/
DIGNITY. COMMUNITY. RECIPROCITY.

Cameron House empowers generations of Chinese American individuals and their families to fully participate in and contribute positively toward a healthy society. We put our Christian faith in action to help people learn, heal, and thrive.

We improve lives every day, often becoming an integral part of our clients’ families for generations. Our faith foundation enables us to see each person as far more than a client. The people we serve become friends and family members—people we love and with whom we develop lifelong relationships. We’re a second home, a place in which all people can be themselves and receive support and respect.

Cameron House has served San Francisco’s Chinese American community for more than 140 years. Through our unique combination of cultural understanding, bilingual programs, therapeutic expertise, and free-to-low-cost services, Cameron House fills critical gaps in order to meet the needs of the Chinatown community. We have earned respect and influence as an advocate for the people we serve. But we are more than an organization that serves the community: We are a community—and because of donors like you, our doors have remained open to those who need us most.

WHO WE SERVE

Opening doors and hearts.

Through our programs, services, leadership development, and partnerships with other nonprofits, we meet the ever-changing needs of our community. We understand the toughest problems residents face because we see their effects every day in the people we serve. Our community includes clients who reside outside of Chinatown in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and travel to Cameron House for services.

We empower individuals and families to solve problems, master new experiences, develop leadership skills, and thrive as productive members of society. Whether we are serving an individual or a family, we take a holistic approach that reflects our understanding of the whole person. We meet each client where he or she is, providing the personalized attention and support needed for a productive, healthy life.

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CHILDREN

A safe space to grow
We provide a safe and nonjudgmental environment for youth and surround them with a network of dedicated, caring adults who guide them, advocate for them, and are invested in their long-term success. We look beyond college to help students become successful adults.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS

A bridge to a new life
Services for new immigrants ease their transition into our community and city. Our Bilingual Afterschool Program boosts children’s language and academic skills, creates friendships, and acts as a bridge between parents and teachers when barriers exist, while ESL and computer classes, counseling, and access to community resources assist adults in becoming self-sufficient.

OUR COMMUNITY

A place to connect
Through our volunteer programs, support groups, classes, and friendship- and network-building opportunities, we serve as a hub for building and maintaining relationships within San Francisco’s Chinese American community.

UNDERSERVED FAMILIES

A helping hand
We offer a variety of programs to assist low-income residents, including an on-site food pantry and free- and reduced-cost counseling services. Through our financial assistance plan, children may participate in all of our youth programs.

VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A place to heal
We help victims of domestic violence leave unsafe situations, receive support from peers, plan for the future, learn healthy boundaries, and achieve their goals. We offer support by accompanying them to legal services, the court house, and other appointments needed in their journey towards safer lives.

3 People Project Participants

150% more children have enrolled in our Bilingual Afterschool Program since 2010.

1 “Low-income” and “extremely low-income” are based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s definitions.
INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

San Francisco is a city in transition. And as housing prices continue to soar, our community is particularly vulnerable. A recent study showed that while the Asian and Pacific Islander population is the city’s fastest-growing racial group, it is also the largest minority affected by poverty. With poverty rates in Chinatown exceeding 30%, Cameron House’s services to families in our community are needed now more than ever. Our social services and youth programs change the trajectory of lives—providing the solutions, resources, and support needed to make a pivotal difference at a challenging time. Receiving culturally and linguistically appropriate services, our clients learn to lift themselves out of poverty into middle- or high-income levels.

Because of donors like you, our community’s residents will have a chance for a healthy family and better life.

We continued to collaborate with a variety of agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area to ensure our clients receive the best possible assistance and opportunities for growth. Partnerships included: Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, APA Family Support Services, the API (Asian Pacific Islanders) Council, API Legal Outreach, Asian Against Violence, Asian Women’s Shelter, Chinatown Child Development Center, Chinatown Community Development Center, Chinatown Rotary Club, Chinatown YMCA, Community Youth Center, District Attorney’s Office’s Victim Services Unit, Gum Moon Women’s Residence/Asian Women’s Resource Center, Heidelberg California Connect, MedCal/CafFresh, Network on Religion and Justice for API LGBTQ People of Faith and Allies, NICS Chinese Health Coalition, the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium, San Francisco Neighborhood Centers Together, Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center, and Wai Yee Children’s Services.

100 cancer patients and their family members received culturally appropriate support services through our Chinese Cancer Support Group, which offers them peer support and helps them build strength to face their illness and live more fulfilling lives.

- Our Chinese Cancer Support Group is the only one in the San Francisco Bay Area that provides services in Cantonese for cancer patients and their family members.
- Friends of AVolunteers made 145 home and hospital visits to support group members who were unable to attend bi-monthly meetings due to hospitalization or treatment.
- Members of the Chinese Cancer Support Group initiated a Prayer Meeting when members saw some of their friends face recurrences of cancer or surgery; those with and without religious beliefs have come together.

78 Chinese immigrant families participated in our Interactive Parent-Child Workshops. Parents learned effective parenting skills, including how to communicate, and build better relationships, with their children.

“After taking English for 10 weeks here, I finally felt that I was part of the English-speaking world.”

—Gina Zhou

21 Cantonese-speaking women received peer support, information, and resources, and have been strengthened and empowered to live safe and healthy lives through our Cantonese Women’s Support Group. The group also welcomed 21 children who attended with their mothers.

95% of participants were from extremely low-to-low-income households.

95% community members received Counseling Services—16% more than last year. Our therapists provided guidance and support for clients experiencing the impact of domestic violence, difficult relationships, emotional and behavioral issues, and challenges adjusting to other life stressors. These services are a particularly valuable resource, as mental health treatment still carries a stigma in the community.

- 16 children received support and services for emotional, behavioral, and social difficulties through our Mental Health Consultation for the Bilingual After School Program.
- 94 community members sought counseling services for spousal, family, and relationship problems.
- 76 new immigrants sought counseling services to help manage life stressors.

51 adults enrolled in our free 10-week ESL Survival English Classes to gain the critical English-language proficiency needed for daily life.

- 100% of class participants displayed improvement in post-course testing.

354,588 pounds of food were distributed to extremely low-to-low-income families through our Food Pantry program.

- 200 families received Thanksgiving groceries at our Annual Harvest Home Thanksgiving Food Project—a collaboration with other local community organizations.

88 clients received assistance accessing and navigating San Francisco Bay Area community resources and information to meet their unique needs through our Community Resources/Care Management Services.

4 “Low-income” and “extremely low-income” are based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s definitions.
INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Cameron House’s Youth Ministries continues to provide some of our most impactful services. We are a second home for our youth, many of whom live with parents and/or grandparents in small apartments or SROs (single room occupancy units, originally designed for single bachelors to live in back in the early 1900s). We offer our youth a safe, supportive environment and work with their families and schools to provide the support needed to ensure their long-term success. Our personalized programming focuses on enhancing the social, emotional, and spiritual development of each child.

Thanks to gifts from our generous donors, this year’s Youth Ministries were able to make a far-reaching impact by providing $105,381 in financial aid to families in need for youth-related services and programs, awarding over $12,000 in academic and vocational scholarships to our graduating high school seniors, and supporting new collaborations that bring youth and elderly together.

**Bilingual Afterschool Program (BAP)**

- 66 low-income, immigrant students from 1st through 8th grade received academic assistance, leadership opportunities, and emotional support to build self-reliance and confidence, while forming strong relationships with peers and adult mentors through BAP.

86% of BAP students were from extremely low-to-low-income households.

**Visual Performing Arts Festival**

- 22 youth explored and developed their artistic abilities while working together as a team, through our Visual Performing Arts Festival and workshops—400% more than last year.

- 14 youth showcased videos they had produced, performed lip syncing, recited poetry, danced, sang, and played piano during the live community festival.

- 17 youth collaborated with Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation in their first-over “3 People Project.” Five videos were produced and featured live at the Debitna Screening Room.

**BAP** identified a 7th grade student who was failing language arts and social studies to receive additional academic support. After two weeks of more intensive, personalized tutoring, her school teacher noticed immediate results and made a point to reach out and praise his increased class participation and completed homework assignments. He is no longer failing and continues to make strides in his social and organizational skills, as well as his self-confidence.

**Kitchen Medicine**

- Nearly 100 students learned about good nutrition habits, basic cooking principles and skills; and the correlation between what they eat, how they feel, and how well they think, through our Kitchen Medicine (KM) and KM Apprentices Programs.

Around two-thirds of the participating families are from extremely low-to-low-income households, which means the youth qualify for free or reduced lunch in the public school district. Many live without access to working kitchens.

**Summer Programs**

- Over 400 youth experienced the outdoors, participated in field trips, enrichment activities, and academic studies; learned new skills; and created new friendships through our summer programs: Branches Youth Program, Cameron Ventures, Solid Ground, Summer Leadership Development Program, and Westminster Woods Residency Camp.

- 293 1st through 8th grade students enjoyed a variety of field trips while engaging in exciting educational and recreational activities.

- 168 5th through 8th grade students went camping in the Presidio, Anthony Chabot Regional Park, and Mt. Tamalpais State Park.

- 108 6th through 12th grade youth and young adult leaders shared fellowship and faith at the Westminster Woods Youth Residence Camp. Campers’ experiences included hiking, canoeing, outdoor cooking and campfires, and evening youth-led worship.

- 78% of our 76 high school volunteer summer leaders were former Cameron House campers when they were younger.

- 183 youth returned from the previous year.

Over half of our participants received financial aid (19% more than last year), thanks to generous support from our donors.

**Friday Night Club**

- Over 90 youth developed leadership and mentoring skills, participated in fundraising and food collection projects, and fostered a deeper sense of spirituality and faith through our Friday Night Club program.

- The youth planned 20 community service projects, social events, and retreats.

Over three-quarters of Friday Night Club youth have participated for more than two years.

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1“Low-income” and “extremely low-income” are based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s definitions.
A YEAR in the LIFE of Cameron House

JANUARY *
We rang in the new year with the Visual Performing Arts Festival—a showcase of multimedia videos and performances created and performed by the Friday Night Club youth community.

FEBRUARY *
Our annual Soul & Elegance Gala, with this year’s theme of “Spirit”, brought together more than 500 community members and raised more than $220,000 for Cameron House programs.

MARCH *
We honored the 120th anniversary of Donaldina Cameron’s ministrations with a “Roots & Reminiscing” alumni event in Pasadena where we celebrated our rich history, connected with alumni, and shared stories about how we carry on her legacy today.

APRIL *
Our Undoc Academy offered its spring Skillfest: Unity of Opposites, with challenging partner exercises and basic massage. And, at Lake Merced, we cheered on youth Dragonboats.

MAY *
On May 2, more than 1,000 community members attended our 67th Annual Cameron Carnival—a Hawaiian-themed celebration with games, live music and dance, food, a silent auction, Dunko, and our famous jade waffles!

JUNE *
The Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation honored Cameron House youth for participating in the Immigrant Voice Program’s 3 People Project—creating original documentary films about immigrant journeys to America.

JULY *
Cameron House Young Adults built houses during a mission trip to New Orleans; the CHANCE Commission helped with sustainability projects at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico; and the Port Braggy Mini-Caravan provided leadership to a three-church Vacation Bible School.

AUGUST *
During our summer youth worship service at the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, three youth leaders shared their experience at Westminster Woods, reflecting upon this year’s theme: “Building Empathy: Walk a Mile in My Shoes.”

SEPTEMBER *
At the start of the school year, we welcomed back the students in our Bilingual After School Program and Friday Night Club—and spiced things up with our Kitchen Medicine programs.

OCTOBER *
Throughout Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we recognized the central role that our domestic violence support programs play in providing a safe space for families to heal and for youth to achieve a brighter future.

NOVEMBER *
Thanks to strong community partnerships and the dedication of Cameron House volunteers, our Annual Harvest Home Thanksgiving Food Project raised more than $4,000—providing 200 bags of Thanksgiving groceries to local families in need.

DECEMBER *
We gathered together with our clients, families, and community to celebrate blessings of the past year and look forward to the next. And the Asian Community Basketball Association basketball team marked its first win of the season!
**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

Fiscal Year October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015

**REVENUE**
- Contributions: $628,380
- Government Grants: $637,450
- Program Fees: $196,259
- Events: $208,231
- Other: $74,499

**EXPENSES**
- Personnel: $1,603,349
- Programs & Operations: $736,155

**ENDOWMENT ASSET**

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**STAFF**

- May Leong: Executive Director
- Bill Vigna: Finance and Operations Director
- Chris Cheuk: Technology Officer
- Cody Friesenbarg Lee: Volunteer & Special Events Manager
- Josh Cheuk: Alumni & Special Projects Coordinator
- Norma Fong Chan: Special Events Consultant
- Annie Luu: Development Database Specialist
- Mary Peterson: Development Associate
- Mary Wong Leong: Office Manager
- Fiona Luk: Receptionist / Administrative Assistant

**BOARD**

- Thomas Pong: President
- Jeanette Ho: Vice President
- Caroline Chinn-Murakshi: Secretary
- Francis Lau: Treasurer (FY13-15)
- Charlene Jung: Treasurer (present)
- Scott Barlow
- Alex Chan*
- Edmund Chin
- Bruce Dar-McLeod
- Wayne Eng*
- Catherine Ko*
- Martin Ke
- Kelly Lin
- Jienne Ma*
- Deborah Sue
- Jeannette Tam
- Wellington Wang
- Joanna Woe
- Wesley Woe
- Kelley Yee

*New Board members serving as of 2015/16