

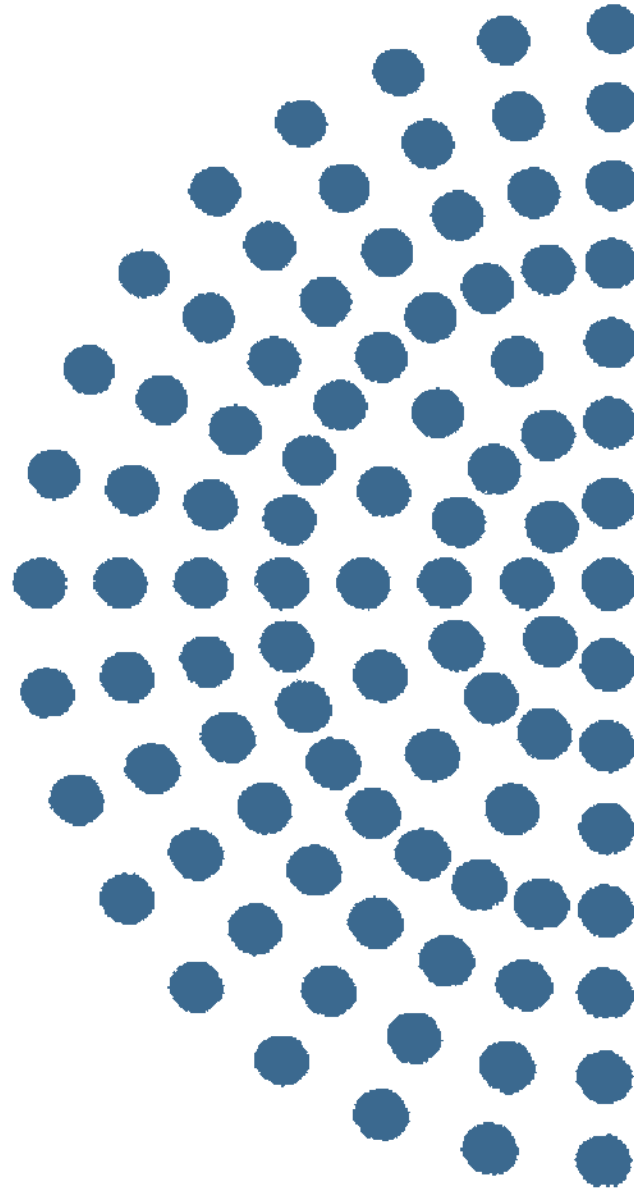
Testimony

VOL 01 — RESEARCH

The Testimony Project

Documentation of the Testimony Project
Kickoff Event at the Asian Art Museum
Artists Drawing Club, June 25, 2015

A PROJECT BY ELIZA GREGORY



“The ethical thing
when telling a
story is to find
the way it can be
complicated.”

**VINCENT PAN, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, CHINESE FOR
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**



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INTRODUCTION

Two years ago, my friend Brittany Blockman told me she was seeing a lot of recently arrived Central Americans in the pediatric clinic at SF General, where she was a resident. She was noticing two things: 1) People had major health issues related to the violence they were escaping, and the journey they took to flee. And 2) no one in the city seemed to realize they were here, let alone talk about it. “Could we do a project together,” she asked, “to raise awareness about this?”

I said yes. I also immediately wanted the project to be about justice and representation. In this culture, many of our social justice stories express a power dynamic, an inequality embedded into the narrative, which gets repeated whenever the story is shared. I wanted to ask questions about how to connect older San Franciscans to newer San Franciscans in an ethical, meaningful and productive way.

What does it look like to decrease the distance between the subjects of a story and the audience? What does it look like when the subjects and the audience are treated as equals? And, on a practical level, what is the experience of arriving here like for someone right now? What’s going on in this city with respect to support structures and challenges for new immigrants or refugees?

Then Marc Mayer approached me to collaborate. He wondered if we could work together to leverage the resources of the museum on behalf of recently arrived immigrants. Was that even possible?

The Testimony Project is being built upon these questions. It’s an elastic, open-ended work that undertakes research with, for and by an audience that raises awareness about contemporary immigration to the Bay Area. Marc suggested we invite the audience into the work from the very beginning, and so that’s what we did. In 2015 the museum hosted a kickoff event where we invited ten different service providers to come and speak to an audience about what they do. We invited the audience into the research that would normally precede a project. This book tells the story of that evening.

eliza.



For the Artists Drawing Club event at the Asian Art Museum on June 25, 2015, I invited ten different service providers—people who work with recent immigrants through a variety of organizations and fields—to come to the museum ready to discuss their work. The audience—a mixture of people rallied by the museum’s network and my own—were invited to move from one provider to another, asking questions about what is going on with regard to immigration right now in San Francisco. There were things to eat and things to drink. What follows is a series of transcribed interviews with many of the service providers who came that night.



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Ana Herrera

Managing Attorney, Deportation
Defense & Legal Advocacy Program,
Dolores Street Community Services

I'm an immigration attorney at Dolores Street Community Services, in the Mission. Most of our clients hear of our services by word of mouth—that's how they walk in the door. Every time someone comes in we ask how they were referred to us, and it's a friend of a friend, or someone from another community-based organization on the ground. We're pretty proud of that. We're pretty proud of the fact that we really feel what's happening here. The effects of nationwide, or worldwide immigration patterns on San Francisco—we see them here first.

We are strong advocates for San Francisco as a sanctuary city. And if we want to keep it that way—keep it a city where immigrants are welcomed—we need to increase the legal services. Unfortunately, the legal system is so broken that a lot of times it's terrible. Sometimes it's sad because there's not much we can do for a lot of folks.

One of our responsibilities as immigration attorneys in a city-based organization that receives city funding, is coming to the city leadership and telling them what's going on. We ask them to be responsive to what's happening. I also work to empower community members to engage in civic advocacy. Right now we're at a point where we're in a wealthy city and the city acknowledges that. So they're funding increased legal services. But it's only because we forced them to. Our job is to force the city to respond to the needs of the people in it.

“Our job is to force the city to respond to the needs of the people in it.”

Ana Herrera advises and represents local residents facing deportation from the United States. Ana recently worked with local advocates and Supervisor David Campos's office to pass a precedent-setting local ordinance to fund legal representation for recently arrived unaccompanied children and families in San Francisco.



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Kaveena Singh

Staff Attorney, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
and Member of the California State Bar

You don't have to be a lawyer actually to do immigration legal work. In fact, you can be something called a BIA Accredited Representative, and you have to work with a lawyer supervising your work. But because there are so few people that do good immigration work, the people in charge allow Accredited Representatives to do some types of immigration-related legal work.

Why are there so few?

I think people know that this is a really vulnerable group of people, immigrants specifically, and they are easily preyed upon. That's sort of the general consensus. If their cases don't go well they are usually deported or removed from the United States, and so there are no consequences for poor lawyering. It draws a certain population of lawyers who know that they can get away with things.

You have all of these people from other countries who don't know the U.S. immigration legal system and they are reliant on people who either call themselves lawyers and aren't lawyers, or who are from their countries and claim to know what's going on, when really they are out there just to take their money and do a shady job. That's part of the problem.

TESTIMONY PROJECT

You have a really interesting perspective on this work because you've been on both sides of it, so to speak, working for the government and then also now helping people to apply for legal status. Can you talk a little bit about that?

I've seen how haphazard things are; if you have the right judge or the right grouping of judges, then a case might be granted. If you get the wrong judge then the same case could be denied. So it is really arbitrary, in that sense.

In some ways there's a little bit of guesswork involved, and I just have to explain that we might think a client has a decent case or a strong case, but ultimately we can't make that decision: a judge is going to do it and we don't know which judge a client is going to get.

I always wanted to work with individuals directly. Many of our clients have suffered horribly. They have suffered torture, rape—the worst types of things that you can imagine. Sometimes they have suffered for their whole lives and then they come here and they leave their abusers behind, but they also have to leave their families behind.

Many people have lived here for years without saying anything and they finally get the courage to come to us and tell their story. It is not easy. A lot of them suppress whatever's happened to them in the past so when they come to us they have to revive all of those horrible things. Then they get granted asylum and they feel this certain sense of release. Many of them describe it as keeping your breath in for many years and then finally letting it go.

I do a lot of client interviewing and a lot of trust building. These are stories that nobody wants to share. People feel a lot of shame around what's happened to them. They've often have been made fun of for certain aspects of their lives. For example, we do a lot of LGBT cases, and so a lot of our clients have been ridiculed and harassed and discriminated against for years and years for being gay. A lot of it is just letting them know that we're here to help and that they can feel comfortable in talking to us.

We usually ask our clients to tell us stories, and the worse a story is, the better their immigration case. The more times they've been raped the better. It's really twisted but that's the reality of it.

The stories really reinforce how lucky we are as American citizens. As hard as this work is, at the end of the day I feel very fortunate to have lived the life that I've lived. It's very humbling and it makes me very appreciative.

“Sometimes they have suffered for their whole lives and then they come here and they leave their abusers behind, but they also have to leave their families behind.”

I think it's important to know why people come to begin with. What's interesting about asylum is that it's not always for economic reasons. Maybe that's part of it, but for the most part that's not the main motivation. It's really because they can't live their lives at home so it's a form of survival generally, or finding freedom. Again, in the LGBT community I think people feel so oppressed in their countries that they can't be themselves. Things like that.

And for the domestic violence victims—those are the ones I work with a lot, or child abuse cases—they just have no autonomy or safety. The child abuse cases can have occurred in the past too. They can be adults now and have suffered childhood domestic violence, or if they are children then they become unaccompanied minors. Either relatives bring them or if they're old enough they come on their own, and then they're connected with a family member here or any adult that will take care of them. We do political cases as well, but asylum is much broader than what I think most people imagine.

The best part is definitely this idea of helping someone, finally after years, get their immigration status and bring their family. It's really satisfying when they finally have some stability here. A lot of their fears go away and then they can be reunited with certain members of their family. That's really exciting. Especially women who have left their children at two or three years old; ten years go by and they finally can be with their kids again. (But then it's a whole other struggle.)

“We usually ask our clients to tell us stories, and the worse a story is, the better their immigration case. The more times they've been raped the better. It's really twisted but that's the reality of it.”

We also get to reunite siblings who were separated. We work a lot with indigenous Guatemalans and a lot of them from one region have come to our office. Many families were torn apart during the genocide in 1982 and oftentimes individuals were adopted by other families or don't even know they have other siblings. And since we have a sufficient database of this particular population, someone will come to us and say, “I don't know who my siblings are.” Or, “I was separated from my family when I was two years old,” or whatever, and we'll look and find that, oh yeah we did have contact with your brother or your sister. We'll call them and they will meet. That's pretty exciting.

My parents immigrated from India. Didn't have much of a difficult time coming here. I grew up in Southern California where there were a lot of immigrants who had very different stories of how they got here, so I was just raised around these issues.

Then I went to college and I taught ESL and I was confronted with some pretty sad stories and tough questions. We had a woman who had two young daughters and she was married to an undocumented man. She decided for her children that she needed to divorce her husband and marry this other man who would then adopt her daughters. And everybody was on board with it. This was her way of helping her children succeed in this country. And it was terrible. It was such a sad story but she couldn't think of any other option. And I thought, “Well this is what I want to do. I want to figure out how to help someone like her.”

Kaveena Singh has her undergraduate degree from Brown University and a Juris Doctor from U.C. Hastings. She started out as a legal intern with EBSC in 2003. After completing law school, she clerked at the Los Angeles Immigration Court through the Attorney General's Honors Program. Most recently, she was a staff attorney at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals working exclusively on immigration cases.

Sarah Farnsworth Torres

Attorney at Law, Tomlinson + Torres

It is definitely conditions in Mexico and Central America that are pushing people here: the gang situation, the violence against women in Honduras and El Salvador and Guatemala. Most of the clients that I'm seeing who are women are probably fleeing domestic violence and sexual abuse. I'm seeing child abuse, I'm seeing gangs, but not as much as you would expect. I'm seeing a mix of things, like, "My parents came here during the war in Guatemala and I haven't seen them in 15, 20 years, and there's this horrible gang problem and my friend got raped." Things that are horrible, but maybe don't rise to the level of necessarily needing protection from the United States. Of course, in their mind and in my mind they do, but the U.S. asylum courts aren't going to offer asylum in cases like that.

In simplest terms, I'm an immigration attorney. My clients come from all over the world, but primarily Mexico and Central America because I practice in Sacramento. The majority of my caseload is family-based immigration. Some people have a spouse or a parent or a child or maybe a brother or sister who want to sponsor them, but that's not as easy as it sounds. It involves long waits and many obstacles to overcome. Another huge part of my caseload are U visas, which are for victims of violent crimes. Recently, a big part of my caseload has been removal defense—people who are being deported.

That is such a weird component of the process, that you have to re-live all these horrible things that have happened to you in order to try to escape. Not only do you have to have more horrible things happen to you by undergoing this crazy journey that is really dangerous, but then you have to talk about all that when you get here. I am traumatizing and re-traumatizing these people every time they talk to me.

I spend a lot of time trying to convey what's going on to people—why it's just so messed up. Why? It doesn't make financial sense, it doesn't make political sense, it's immoral, it goes against our laws and our values, and I don't think people understand what's going on.

"We have a system in place to protect asylum-seekers and we've ignored that."



We have a system in place to protect asylum-seekers and we've ignored that. We can look back to World War II and the Holocaust and say, "This is why we have asylum and refugee law, to protect people who are being persecuted, to make sure that what happened with the USS St. Louis—when Jews fleeing the Holocaust were turned away—never happens again." But we are turning away populations who are being persecuted and who are in danger, just like we did back then. It's the same exact thing.

This is people seeking asylum. It's people who cannot go to their home country and all of a sudden now we're calling them illegal immigrants.

Saying "illegal immigrant" has many, many problems, but putting that label on somebody who is doing literally what they're being asked to do under international law is crazy. If you want to seek asylum in most circumstances, you can't ask for it in your home country. In most countries, there is not a way to ask for asylum, get it, and then come in lawfully. Being granted refugee status in that way is very rare. The way that you seek asylum is, "Hi, I want to seek asylum." These people are not unlawful immigrants; they're engaging the system. They're doing what they've been asked to do. They're doing the only thing that is available to them and we are turning them away. We're not even just turning them away, we're incarcerating them. I think people don't understand that it's not a streamlined way to handle people, this is mass incarceration.

I generally don't do a lot of detention work just because you can't do everything in your practice. But just like everyone else, I heard about this influx of children and women. I see these people every day, but when you see it on TV, I don't know, it's different. You see these children in their little Red Cross blankets and stupid me, not thinking, "I'm an immigration lawyer," but thinking like, I don't know, the well-meaning white woman that I am, "Oh,

“This is people seeking asylum. It’s people who cannot go to their home country and all of a sudden now we’re calling them illegal immigrants.”

I could be a foster mom for these kids." It's so stupid, you know? I thought, "Oh, I want to help these kids. I wish there was a way for me to help." Like, duh. I finally realized, "Hello! There actually is a way I can help these kids in my professional capacity."

So I became concerned with these issues and I thought about how I could get involved. I was at a conference for the American Immigration Lawyers Association in California, and they had been talking for months about this project that was going on in Artesia in New Mexico. They were going to the detention center where all these women and their children were going. I'd heard about those women in passing and thought, "Oh yeah, that's terrible; maybe people should go down there and help," but I hadn't really put it together. Then finally at this conference I was talking to the people who are leading this project and they were telling me how horrible it was, and about the amazing things that they were doing.

Before AILA (the American Immigration Lawyers Association) got involved, it was just a deportation factory. I mean people were just getting deported in a very streamlined way. There was not a whole lot of due process. The judges seemed to be agreeing with the government's argument that these women and children are national security risks, because if we allow them to stay, if we don't detain them, we were going to have this whole influx of immigrants. It's a "get them in, get them out" mentality—let's not worry about what the underlying claims are. Let's not look at the actual issues. Let's just get them in, send a message, and get them out.

Then once AILA stepped in, the judges actually had to start listening and giving hearings and conditions were improving.

What causes that? Why in that situation were the judges so unified in their attitude and who did that come from?

That's a good question. I don't know. That's what I've been asking myself for years. Why were judges not giving Guatemalans asylum but they were giving Nicaraguans asylum in the 1980's? I don't know. Because they're part of the Department of Justice and they get orders from somewhere. I don't mean to sound conspiratorial, but there's some sort of policy above them that influences their behavior.

In Artesia, the government had a precedent that said if someone is a national security risk you can throw all those other factors out the door. If someone is not a flight risk and they don't have a criminal history, you're supposed to

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SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

be able to release them and DHS (the Department of Homeland Security) said, “No, no, no. If we think that they are risks for another reason, because the group is going to start this influx, then that trumps it.” I don’t know if the judges were buying that because they had conservative judges from a certain jurisdiction, or because the Administration somehow trickled certain orders down. You never know exactly what’s going on behind the scenes.

And if they were in San Francisco that probably wouldn’t have happened. We have different judges and a different climate and you never know. I think it just shifted because of so much advocacy on AILA’s part. I give them a lot of credit and I think also there was a shift in judges. But a lot of the changes came from getting lawyers in there every single day, and to say, “No. You can’t do this.” Really just pushing the issue and also getting the media involved too. I think that probably helped.

The overarching theme that I see is that anyone from the poorest, most persecuted person, up to a very highly educated wealthy person, can still get stuck in a system that makes no sense.

Sarah Farnsworth Torres represents clients in family-based petitions and waivers of inadmissibility, asylum, naturalization, and removal proceedings. She has a particular interest in representing victims of domestic violence and other violent crimes. In January 2015 she traveled to Texas to participate in a pro bono project representing detained women and children. Most recently, she has successfully represented several unaccompanied minors in asylum proceedings.



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

David Lei

Board Member, Asian Art Museum

A lot of the history of civil rights and immigrant rights is connected to the Chinese Exclusion Law passed in 1882, and the legal push-back by the Chinese, which was very organized against these harsh laws that were, now that we look at them, quite un-American.

The Chinese fought back. They hired the best lawyers money could buy to fight these exclusionary and discriminatory laws. The Chinese, from 1882 to 1905, had more than 10,000 federal cases where they sued. More than 20 of these went to the Supreme Court. The Chinese won many of these, including equal protection under the law, defining citizenship, right to a public education, and so on.

But what was horrific was that the courts gave up. There were too many cases—more than 10,000 cases. So in 1905, there was a Supreme Court case, *Ju Toy v. the U.S.*, where the courts gave up their rights of oversight for the Immigration and Naturalization Department. That's why today, the Immigration and Naturalization Department has its own power. Nowadays, because of lack of judiciary oversight, they play by different rules. That's why it's still so harsh and if you say, "This is not what this country is about," you're correct because this is arbitrary.

The Chinese, we don't talk about this, but I think it should be out there. We should recognize this history, how we ended up with an immigration department that's outside the law in terms of judiciary review. They have extraordinary power that the other administrative departments don't have. In 1905 the courts said, "We'll give that up."

“If you say, ‘This is not what this country is about,’ you’re correct because this is arbitrary.”

TESTIMONY PROJECT

Then came the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. In 1943 the U.S. was at war with Germany, Italy, and Japan. It was brought to the administration's attention that China was our ally during World War II. How come you don't let your allies into this country? How come they can't be naturalized citizens? So Congress allowed 105 Chinese to come in a year. I came in during that time.

When we had the Civil Rights Movement and President Johnson got the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 we finally awoke to the fact that the immigration quota was unfair. From 1965 on, the Chinese quota—or Asian quota—was 20,000. From 105 to 20,000.

All of a sudden, you need to increase all your social services by 10, 20, 30 percent. All of a sudden, you have all these immigrants that you have to teach English to. That's why, by 1974 we had a lot of problems with our education system, and gangs, because kids going to school weren't learning. Teachers didn't know how to work with these kids that didn't speak English. Many of our social services started at that time.

President Johnson also had the War on Poverty. I remember waking up one day and finding out Chinatown was a ghetto. I never thought of that because everyone was poor in front of you in the Chinese community. Everyone was poor. You didn't think you were poor until the statistics told you that you were. Then Johnson put in all these programs. It really helped to change Chinatown.

The community was forward-thinking in 1986 and passed this master plan saying you cannot take away housing, you cannot build beyond four stories, and you cannot have businesses that are more than 2,500 square feet. Chinatown, San Francisco, has probably the only private hospital in the nation that's making money. Their services are 60 percent of the cost of Blue Cross Blue Shield. So it's very good services at a very low price. That's a whole other story, but they built this model. People have tried to duplicate it, but you can't because you have to build your community first.

“I remember waking up one day and finding out Chinatown was a ghetto.”

SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Many people look at Chinatown today and say, “It's dingy.” Many of my American-born Chinese friends and Chinese friends in general, and a lot of the tourists from China, they come to Chinatown and say, “This is an embarrassment to the Chinese. It's substandard. The housing, it's dirty, it's backwards.” I say, “Great.” Because of all these issues—there are cockroaches, there are rats, there are SROs (which are tight, crowded, and dirty), the highest tuberculosis rate in the nation—it's cheap. If you are an immigrant, a poor immigrant, how else are you going to get started?

You don't care if it's dirty and rat-infested, as long as you can afford to put your family somewhere off the streets to get started. Somehow new immigrants do it. They live in these shabby conditions. Within five years, they raise enough money as a family to put a down payment elsewhere, and they move out. The incentive to move out is great, but during those five years, they're close to all the social services. They can learn English. There are bilingual classes. There are citizenship classes. There are trade classes in their language. They can get a job in Chinatown without having to know English. Rent is cheap. There's turnover because people move out. They do better.

David Lei has over four decades of experience in entrepreneurship and involvement in Bay Area nonprofits. He is Treasurer for the Friends of Bancroft Library, Board Member of the Asian Art Museum, and the Vice Chair of the Center for Asian American Media. He is an advocate for the Chinese American community and a scholar of Chinese American history.

Sarah Wan

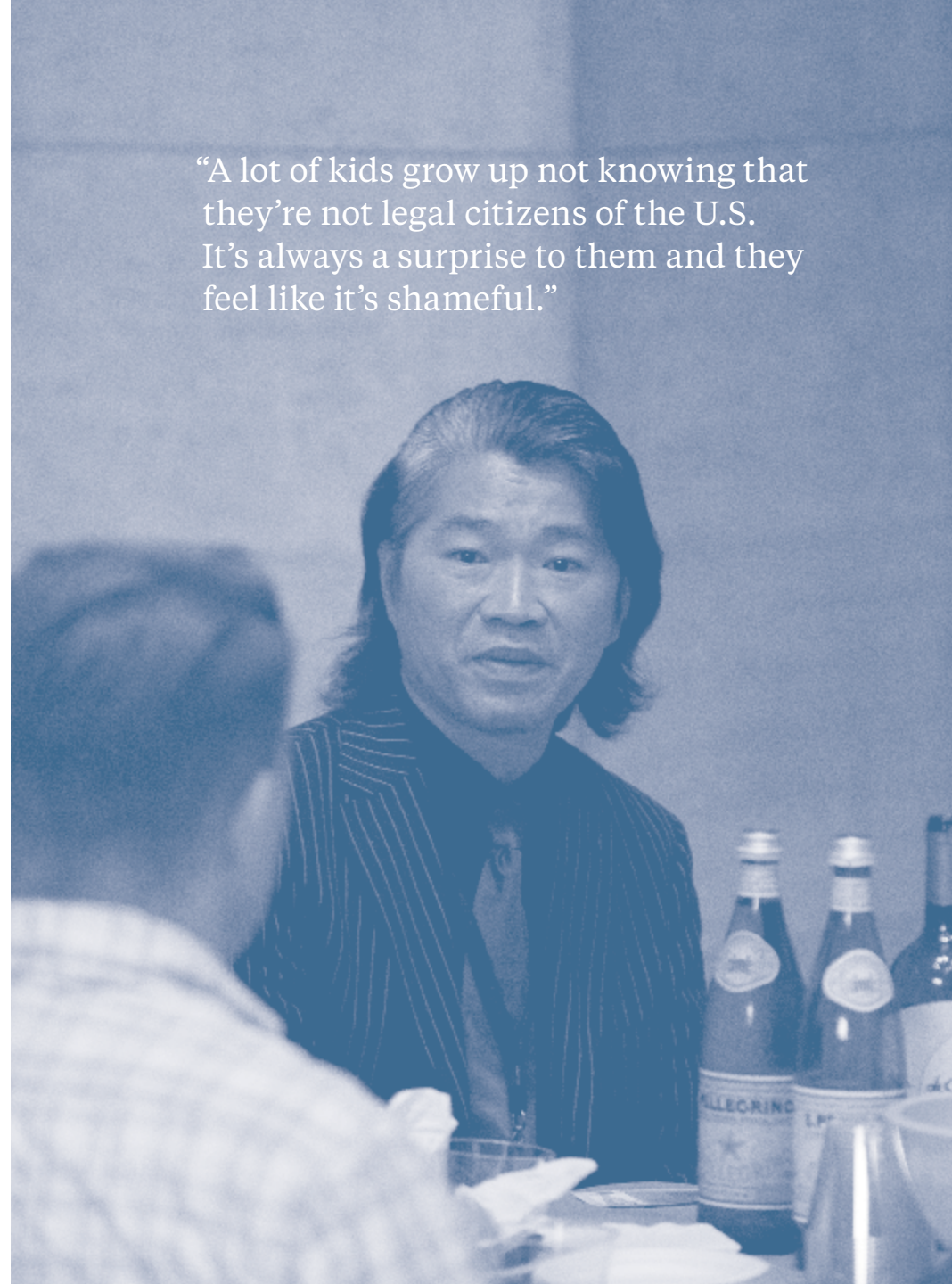
Executive Director, Community Youth Center

CYC was founded in 1970. The original name was the Chinatown Youth Coordinating and Service Center and it was founded because in the 1970's there were gang issues in the Chinatown area. So a few concerned community members grouped together and got the first funding, from the city government, to start CYC. It was originally in Chinatown. It started working with high-risk youth, youth gangsters, youth involved in criminal activities. Our first Executive Director, Barry Fong-Torres, was actually killed one morning, in his own residence. After that, we kind of changed the strategy a little bit to do delinquency prevention.

I was an immigrant myself. I came here at sixteen as a foreign student. I knew nobody in San Francisco, in the whole of America, except my dad's uncle, who lived here in Chinatown. He is one of those elders who lives in Chinatown, works in Chinatown, eats in Chinatown. The first year I stayed in an SRO—I shared a room with his niece or grand-niece and that year I learned how to navigate independently and how to learn about a new community. I was using the term “dropped” into San Francisco at sixteen. I felt like I was being punished. I thought, “What have I done wrong to be brought to a place where I don't know anyone?” And nobody really helped me understand why I had to struggle so much. They thought it was good for me, but my parents really didn't know what I was going through. Back then I had a lot of misconceptions, anger, and frustration.

When I started working with CYC youth in the nineties, I saw the same problems still happening, if the kids came from an underprivileged family. Economic security is always an issue. You can imagine a family of five living in a house that's 10x8 ft. They can't find their own privacy, there's no room for them, it's not a safe and nurturing environment for them. That still

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SARAH
WAN

happens. That's why a lot of immigrants, when they first come, they stay in Chinatown for the first couple of years and then they move out into different neighborhoods in the city.

In the 70's, 80's, there were a lot of high risk youth, there was a lot of tension between American-born and immigrant youth, and in the 80's, you have an influx of gangs from Hong Kong, because Hong Kong was facing takeover by China in 1997, so a lot of immigrants came at that time. In 2000, you see a lot more immigrants coming from southern China, not from Hong Kong, so their education level or English level is very low. It takes them a long time to get to the education level that they deserve. A lot of immigrants, they were professionals in China or Hong Kong, and when they get here they become dishwashers or waiters.

I think one of the changes is that before, a lot of the immigrants would stay in Chinatown, but now a lot move out to the Sunset, the Richmond, or even Bayview. Before, there were lot of gang bangers and brotherhoods, and there's still some of that, but lately a lot of the crime is really financially driven.

A lot of youth problems that parents bring to us nowadays are related to computer addiction or substance abuse addiction. For a new immigrant, they just want to stay at home, isolated from the world, but able to connect with their friends in China. For some of them, it's because they can't stand to face the failure of not being able to pass a class because of the language barrier. Some of the youth might have behavioral health issues but it's such a stigma in the culture that they don't know how to seek help. A lot of parents have a lot of issues but don't know how to seek help either.

“I see a lot of people, a lot of families, with high resilience, and I think a lot of them still have very positive attitudes. They never give up.”

A lot of kids grow up not knowing that they're not legal citizens of the U.S.. It's always a surprise to them and they feel like it's shameful, and they don't know how to continue their education and they don't know how their voice can be heard. It's definitely an issue that I don't think the Asian Pacific Islander community talks enough about.

But it's still a dream for them to come here, because they believe that as long as you are willing to work hard and study hard, there's a chance that you can earn a better living, and you don't have to worry about political turmoil—it's still a dream. Something I'm proud of when I look at the immigrant community is that I see a lot of people, a lot of families, with high resilience, and I think a lot of them still have very positive attitudes. They never give up. I think that's the spirit that you can see in a lot of immigrant families.

Sarah Wan graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1997 with a degree in psychology. Building on her experience as a young immigrant, she became involved with the Community Youth Center in the late 1990's, first as a counselor, running workforce development programs and parenting classes and later as a program manager. She holds a master's degree in Administrative Planning from San Francisco State University. Prior to working at CYC she worked in a mental health clinic.

Neeti Doshi, MD, MPH

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, UCSF/SFGH Department of Pediatrics

I'm a resident in pediatrics at UCSF, and I'm in my last year of training. My clinical home for the most part has been San Francisco General. I'm not a San Francisco native, but you can feel the connection to community and history embedded within this hospital, which makes it a phenomenal place to work. Ward 86 is the old-school AIDS ward, where the first cases of AIDS were diagnosed, treated, and monitored. The first cases of people dying of AIDS happened in Ward 86.

"The General" opens its doors to everybody. It's the only trauma center in San Francisco, so you see everything, anybody that's in a trauma. If the President were to get into a trauma accident, he would come to San Francisco General, just the same as you, or me, or an undocumented migrant would. There's a real sense of openness there, of caring, which I wouldn't have anticipated when you're working at a big public hospital where things get taxing and the system isn't always fair. But that's always been, and still is, at the heart of San Francisco General.

The last three or four years have seen a huge surge of migrants and unaccompanied minors. Not only undocumented families but also unaccompanied, undocumented children who have made their way across the border and are now here for a number of different reasons. It's a wave we're seeing in many different parts of society, but as a pediatrician it becomes evident in clinical encounters that many of our patient's health complaints are related to the fact that they're not documented.

Trauma, both psychological and physical, experienced along the way, is an example that comes to mind. Patients we see have been raped coming across the border. They've been cut off from their families. They've literally walked thousands of miles to get somewhere. And then they walk into our hospital

and all of it unravels. Building relationships and meaningful connections with our patients takes time, and requires a willingness to unmask and understand the connections between traumatic experiences and health outcomes. Our healthcare system isn't built to make this easy, so you become as creative and as resourceful as possible. A lot of that happens in clinical encounters, because most people don't go to the doctor unless they're sick.

It won't happen in a single 15-minute clinical visit, but each interaction is an opportunity to make sure your patient feels heard, respected, and valued. Even in 15 minutes, there's a lot you can accomplish if you're able to stay open and honest and true to the person in front of you. Harnessing this vulnerability is one of the biggest gaps I see in medical education and training, particularly in low-income/underserved settings.

For many immigrants and unaccompanied minors I encounter clinically, it's not the medical diagnoses that keep me awake at night, but rather how do we, as health care providers, shift the dialogue from one of adversity to one of resilience or opportunity? Whatever medical things arise that are relatively quick to treat, there's always this broader context of, where does this individual define opportunity? And how can the health sector or a hospital help them? And also how can we understand our barriers to helping them?

"Patients we see have been raped coming across the border. They've been cut off from their families. They've literally walked thousands of miles to get somewhere. And then they walk into our hospital and all of it unravels."



I hesitate to say that we need more provider training. I think the shift needs to be part of a larger dialogue...that there needs to be a greater general awareness and acceptance around how we decide to treat people. We need to acknowledge the biases we bring to our everyday interactions that can set us up for failure or success and build this awareness into the fabric of medical education.

There are many examples of kids coming in with a variety of complaints, called “somatization,” which is when your body manifests stress in a number of different ways. That could be through constipation, numbness and tingling complaints—basically just disconnected problems. As doctors, we have to make sure that there’s not something serious going on, since it can manifest in so many different ways, and it propagates. As a clinician, oftentimes it’s doing more harm than good if we go on a wild goose chase looking for a diagnosis, when in fact we have to just face it, that this is real trauma.

There’s a growing body of literature looking at stress. We’re starting to see downstream effects of stress, toxic stress, PTSD, the sense of feeling abandoned and social isolation. It’s starting to have real consequences in the health system, and it becomes relevant because a lot of these patients get deemed frequent fliers if they come back to the emergency room or they come back to urgent care and they have the same complaints and nothing works. Their situation is dismissed, when in fact it hasn’t been unpacked—there’s all this psychological trauma going on. We have to be asking, “What does this mean ten years down the road for this family?”

“For me, understanding where there can be moments of integration within systems—in school and health, psychology and health, law and health—is crucial.”

For me, understanding where there can be moments of integration within systems—in school and health, psychology and health, law and health—is crucial. How can we integrate better so that when we’re treating a certain diagnosis, it’s not just coming from one provider, but addressed by many providers at once?

Neeti Doshi is a clinician and educator at San Francisco General Hospital. Originally from North Carolina, Neeti fostered a commitment to public service as the daughter of immigrant physicians. She attended Barnard College at Columbia University receiving a dual bachelor’s degree in Spanish and Latin American Studies. Her experiences as a Fulbright Scholar in Mexico and a Perkins-Burke Fellow in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, seeded a responsibility to improve health care system capacity in low-resource settings globally. She holds an MPH from the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health with a focus on program planning and evaluation. As a pediatrician at San Francisco General Hospital, she is driven to address upstream social determinants that lead to inequalities in child health.



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Alden Blair

PhD Candidate, University of British Columbia and Lecturer, UCSF School of Global Health Sciences

My master's looked at the immigrant health experience, because I was really intrigued by the fact that you find people who've made it to the U.S., to Canada, to Europe, and they're healthier. Their health metrics blow the native population out of the water, because they've undergone the mental and physical stresses of migration. Then, within a single generation, their health becomes just as poor—or worse—than native population in a state. Often that continues in subsequent generations.

A lot of that, I've been finding, has to do with mental health changes like depression, feelings of exclusion, and how that mediates with substance use— whether it's taking up smoking, starting to drink like the local population, or using other substances to cope with feelings of exclusion.

I'm using mixed methods to see how the data mirrors the stories, or doesn't mirror the stories, that individuals have. How the data from a group and an individual story can each represent a truth that may be totally conflicting with the other. But both aggregate data and an individual experience are the truth for either a population or for an individual. How do you approach that, if you have two conflicting truths? How do you respect them and try and help deal with each one?

Alden Blair is an NIH supported mixed-methods epidemiologist currently examining the interplay of trauma, substance use, and HIV in post-conflict settings of sub-Saharan Africa. Alden has worked on policy in the United States Congress and on health and development programs in Burundi, Cameroon, and Uganda. Through his work, Alden has significant experience in the stages of assessing the direct health needs of immigrant and refugee populations, tracking larger overall trends, and the implementation of domestic health policy.



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Marisol Romero

Psychology Fellow, UCSF School of Medicine

My caseload is mostly eating disorders. The youngest patient I have is seven, and the oldest is 21. It's a wide range. All the of the kids here have Medi-Cal and are usually low socioeconomic status and all of my caseload is Spanish-speaking. I'm getting a lot of new immigrants that are having eating issues.

There are a lot of new immigrants who come and have an adjustment time, adjusting to being with the parents, eating the parents' food, and the food here is so different. Then a year later I'll get someone who is malnourished and underweight and developing all these body issues. I don't know where that's coming from. It's totally new. The eating disorders in Latinos are showing up in a very different way. They come from someone who has been overweight, or in a higher percentile BMI, and then they have a quick drop. They still show up in a healthy percentile, because their weight is average, but they've actually lost about twenty pounds in the last couple months, and that's really dangerous. That's something that we are seeing increasingly, but we haven't made sense of it yet. There's a been a lot: both boys and girls. It's going to be hard but we'll figure it out.

“When it comes to family reunification, many of them are coming and seeing people that they barely know, even if it’s their parents.”

When it comes to family reunification, many of them are coming and seeing people that they barely know, even if it's their parents. Usually when the children come here they have this ideal of what it's going to be like to live with their parents and how everything is going to be great, and their problems are going to be solved. They get here and the parents are working and not really available. It's a huge disappointment, the reality of what it is like to live with a parent. That's why one of the things that we are trying to do is develop groups for reunified families to give them the support they need: having parents go to parenting classes to help them understand the adjustment and transition. The parents have an extreme amount of guilt for leaving the child, so when the child brings it up that, "You left me," they really do feel bad. Sometimes they get defensive or shut down and become depressed. It really triggers the mental health of the parents, which then causes more mental health issues in the child. That's been very challenging in terms of our work and the services that they should be given.

When I see immigrants that are coming in, I know that they survived something horrible to come here. They had to do something really difficult to be able to come here and them being here—just being here—it shows how much strength they have within themselves and how much pressure they were under to make a better life. And whether we take that up as an opportunity to give them the ability to grow to something great, or if them coming here is going to become another obstacle—we need to change our mentality and see the strength in all the families coming instead of seeing them as a burden. I think there are still a lot of people that see it as a burden.

Leaving your child behind is the hardest thing that anybody could do. There's just no way that you would leave your child for anything other than to help your child or to save their life. And that is something that's hard to understand and it comes with a lot of guilt.

“Leaving your child behind is the hardest thing that anybody could do. There’s just no way that you would leave your child for anything other than to help your child or to save their life.”

We've had a few families that come here and they were doing really well in their home country. They come here and they are now experiencing poverty, they left their huge homes and their careers, their degrees. Those are the people that get targeted the most because they have money: there's extortion going on. And here people treat them like they're not educated and they don't deserve an opportunity. It's a disservice.

With every family, you get this amazing story, there's a richness to their story, and they are all so different and unique. They teach you so much, you just have to listen.

Marisol was born in Mexico and moved to California with her family as a migrant field worker when she was 13. She earned her BA in Psychology at the University of California, Irvine, and then worked for several years as part of the child life program at UCI Medical Center before completing her master's in clinical psychology with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy. Dr. Romero went on to complete her doctorate in clinical psychology and now specializes in Pediatric Consultation and Eating Disorders at San Francisco General Hospital.



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Philip Nguyen Executive Director, Southeast Asian Community Center

Our agency, the Southeast Asian Community Center (SEACC), was established 41 years ago, in 1975, in the aftermath of the war in Vietnam. In 1975 the Communists took over all three countries: Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

We wanted to open our hand to accept these people who would be treated very unfairly under the Communist regime. We helped them with resettlement. We found homes for them. We tried to find jobs for them, or if they did not have the skills, we provided job skills for them. All of the Southeast Asians that came here in 1975 are legal immigrants. Most of them are what we call political refugees and most of the political refugees are accepted in this country as legal. They are entitled to apply for citizenship here.

In 1975, we did not have the Internet. We didn't even have pagers. In 1975, the people who were new to this country needed even more help than people now. Many of them were completely unfamiliar with the new country. The culture is different, the way of living is different, and many of them had never heard of people from the outside world.

Now, we serve all people, regardless of their nationality or their identity. We serve most of the people in the Tenderloin. Poor immigrants still need help no matter where they come from. The elderly, especially those who do not speak English well, don't understand the culture here or the life here very well. The need is always there.

Though they have been here for four decades, the Southeast Asians are among the less-well-known ethnic groups. There is little ethnic press that covers the Vietnamese community in San Francisco. In fact, there is only one Vietnamese weekly magazine published in San Francisco, but like the majority of other Vietnamese-language newspapers that are available, it is often filled with news and politics from the homeland, and very little local information, or mainstream American politics. The Southeast Asian

A man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a denim jacket, is speaking into a microphone. He is looking slightly to his right. The background is blurred, showing other people at what appears to be a community event or gathering. The entire image has a blue tint.

“The need is always there.”

SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Community Center commits to playing a role of helping the Southeast Asian community and their Tenderloin neighbors to better understand each other.

The majority of Southeast Asians are foreign-born, and are more likely to have low educational attainment levels and to live in poverty than other Asian Americans. We know better than to accept the over-generalizing “model minority” image of Asian Americans, and understand that Americans of Southeast Asian descent tend to experience difficulties in language, education, and employment at rates that exceed those of many other mainstream American and Asian American groups. We have worked with other organizations to ensure that those issues which concern Southeast Asians are not buried underneath the gloss of the “model minority image.”

Various studies on Southeast Asian people, especially those conducted by the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) in Washington, D.C., often draw attention to the fact that 43% of Cambodians and 60% of Hmong in this country live in poverty, Vietnamese American women are five times more likely than European American women to suffer from cervical cancer, and over 60% of Hmong Americans live in linguistically isolated households.

Philip Nguyen has been a refugee and immigrant advocate for the past three decades. He worked as the Director of Investment Promotion at the Industrial Development Bank of Vietnam before escaping wartime strife by boat and resettling in Southern California in 1984. Besides his current position, he is the Chair of the Vietnamese American Coalition for Civil Rights, Chair Emeritus of the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, Chair of the Community Technology Foundation of California, and on the boards of the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation and the Vietnamese Health Promotion Project of UCSF. He is also on the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Advisory Committee of Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART).



SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Vincent Pan

Executive Director,
Chinese for Affirmative Action

My entire adult life I have worked for public interest and social justice organizations. As a child of immigrants and a person of color, I understood early on what it means to be an outsider. That perspective has shaped my sensitivity to the suffering of others, especially those who are left behind.

One of the major things we've done at CAA (Chinese for Affirmative Action) is to cultivate a network—Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality—that supports social justice groups pursuing progressive change on a range of interdependent issues. These issues include queer and trans justice, mass incarceration, anti-Muslim hate, media representation, and immigrant rights. The aim is to practice an ethical framework that emphasizes what we stand for and not just what we look like, and that models the type of cooperation we would like to see in the world.

I think everyone needs to recognize the incredible suffering experienced by undocumented immigrants. This occurs as a result of being separated from their family members, living in fear of deportation, and brutal workplace exploitation. I want to believe that all people possess enough humanity to be appalled by the needless suffering of others.

America often describes itself as a nation of immigrants. But that fails to acknowledge the mass genocide inflicted upon Native Americans or the slavery that brought African Americans here in chains, as unwilling immigrants. The story of immigration in America is multifaceted, and its telling reflects conscious choices and selective memory. To me, the ethical thing when telling a story is to find the way in which it can be complicated.

Many of the myths about American immigration have become so broad and sanitized that they have lost meaning and only serve political purposes. For example, there is a false image of undocumented immigration that portrays Mexican border crossings when actually most undocumented immigration is related to overstayed visas. And very few people recognize that Asians

comprise about 10 percent of the undocumented population in America.

Basically, all people, whether they are immigrants or not, wish to be with their families. Broken immigration policies are literally tearing families apart. I have met so many undocumented youth—18, 19 years old—who haven't seen their parents in years.

I believe strongly that all people deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity regardless of their immigration status. Public schools, safety, and health agencies have no business cooperating with immigration enforcement. The fear of ICE raids has discouraged parents from sending their children to school, silenced workers who have suffered workplace abuses, and prevented domestic violence victims from calling the police. That is not good for anybody.

Many of the 10,000 undocumented Chinese immigrants in San Francisco who could qualify for relief and assistance programs are too afraid to come out of the shadows because of anti-undocumented stigma and fear of persecution. This is something that we need to change.

Similarly, more than half of San Francisco speaks a language other than English at home. When someone goes to the hospital to treat an infectious disease, when someone calls the fire department to report smoke, it's in everyone's interest for those institutions to help people in the language that they speak.

So much xenophobia is rooted in fear of anything or anyone that can be otherized. A starting point has to be to recognize and know the "other" in addition to celebrating diversity and difference in general.

It was an interesting experience at the Asian Art Museum event last June. The basic questions asked of me were reminders of how little we can know about each other's situations. Sharing simple stories can make a difference.

“I believe strongly that all people deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity regardless of their immigration status.”

In moments of fear, people can react very shortsightedly and there can be terrible consequences. You can see this happening at Donald Trump rallies where the hostility towards immigrants has risen to a fantastic pitch. But it's not just at those rallies—there is plenty of anti-immigrant hysteria in San Francisco and the Bay Area, too. The hysteria in a place like San Francisco makes you realize that in other places it's off the charts.

We have to confront hateful rhetoric even as we transform ourselves. When the President says, “We want to deport felons, not families,”—felons have families, too. Every construct we create, about who is in and who is out, has to be continuously revisited. We have to challenge ourselves to always examine who we mean when we say “community” and what we can do to expand it as a matter of conscience. In America, we have largely made and changed immigration rules to suit the political mood and goals of those already in power. People can be seduced by simplistic euphemisms, for example, by proclaiming that they don't see or want to see race. But how others choose to self-identify is something we should strive to see as clearly as we can. That clarity is how we create a society that is more compassionate, inclusive, and equitable.

Migration is at the core of the history of human beings on Earth. People move. And in my view, where we are born is largely a matter of luck. Those born into more fortunate circumstances need to be honest and humble about the arbitrariness of their situations. I think we can approach some of these issues with a little more humility, a little more generosity, and a little more compassion.

Chinese for Affirmative Action is a community-based civil rights organization in San Francisco. CAA has advocated on a range of issues including language access, immigrant rights, affirmative action, educational equity, and marriage equality. Prior to joining CAA, Vincent Pan worked on HIV/AIDS treatment and care issues in China, and before that, with low-income children and youth in Washington, D.C.

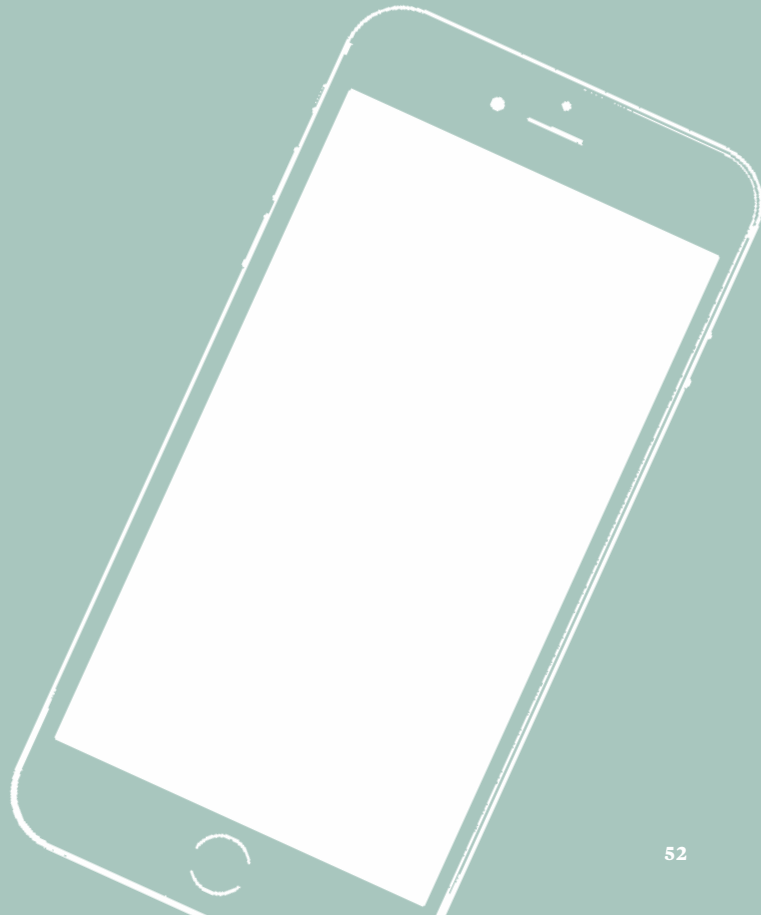


MUSEUM OUTREACH

Indra Mungal

Community Engagement Officer,
Asian Art Museum

“We are still finding our way as an institution in terms of serving immigrant communities. My role is to develop relationships and partnerships with a variety of community groups and individuals, focusing on Asian and Asian American needs and interests. I help identify how the museum is currently serving visitors and the community, and I work with staff to improve those services, and the visitor experience.”



“Immigration is what has led to my birth and my being here, and hearing that there are people out there that don’t support something like that is interesting, because it is like, they don’t support my existence, really.”

SOPHIA ENGLISH, COLLEGE FRESHMAN



“My work intersects with immigration because we are trying to support communities’ artistic forms and the ways that cultures continue through different culture-bearers and masters. It’s very easy to lose support for those things outside of the home country.”

WESTON TERUYA, ARTIST
AND ARTS GRANTMAKER



“Immigration is very important to San Francisco and California as a whole. It’s basically what’s made the city and the state as wonderful and vibrant as they are. The process of coming has become more convoluted in the last few years and I hope to see more work being done to make it easier for people to immigrate.”

TONY TORRES, BUSINESS MANAGER



“My feelings on immigration: I’m supportive and pretty clueless.”

BEN GIMPERT, RESEARCHER FOR
AN ASSET MANAGER





“It is such a wonderful thing, so many people from all these different countries, with different ideas, with different perspectives on life, they come here and they share that with us. Without that, we would be a one-sided, one story country. And with immigration, we are more than that.”

VANESSA LARA, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT



“I am struck by the number of injustices that people face and the systems that are very much broken and discriminatory. And I appreciate how many people in this area are welcoming to immigrants.”

AMBER, MCCHESEY-YOUNG, VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR AND CASE MANAGER AT
OAKLAND CATHOLIC WORKER

“I don’t really know much about the immigration situation since I’m a student and I don’t read a lot of newspapers, and the people around me don’t talk much about that.”

JACK, STUDENT



“Immigration is so complicated. We’re really fortunate to live in the Bay Area because it’s a wonderful place. And I’m really fortunate because my ancestors immigrated here long before me and gave me the opportunity to have the wonderful life that I have. And I think in America, sometimes we forget that so many—really all—of us came over as immigrants. And it’s good to be in this forum where we can hear the different stories from people who are working with immigrants, and what they’re doing to give people access to resources that should be basic human rights.”

MARISA LEONG, TOURISM



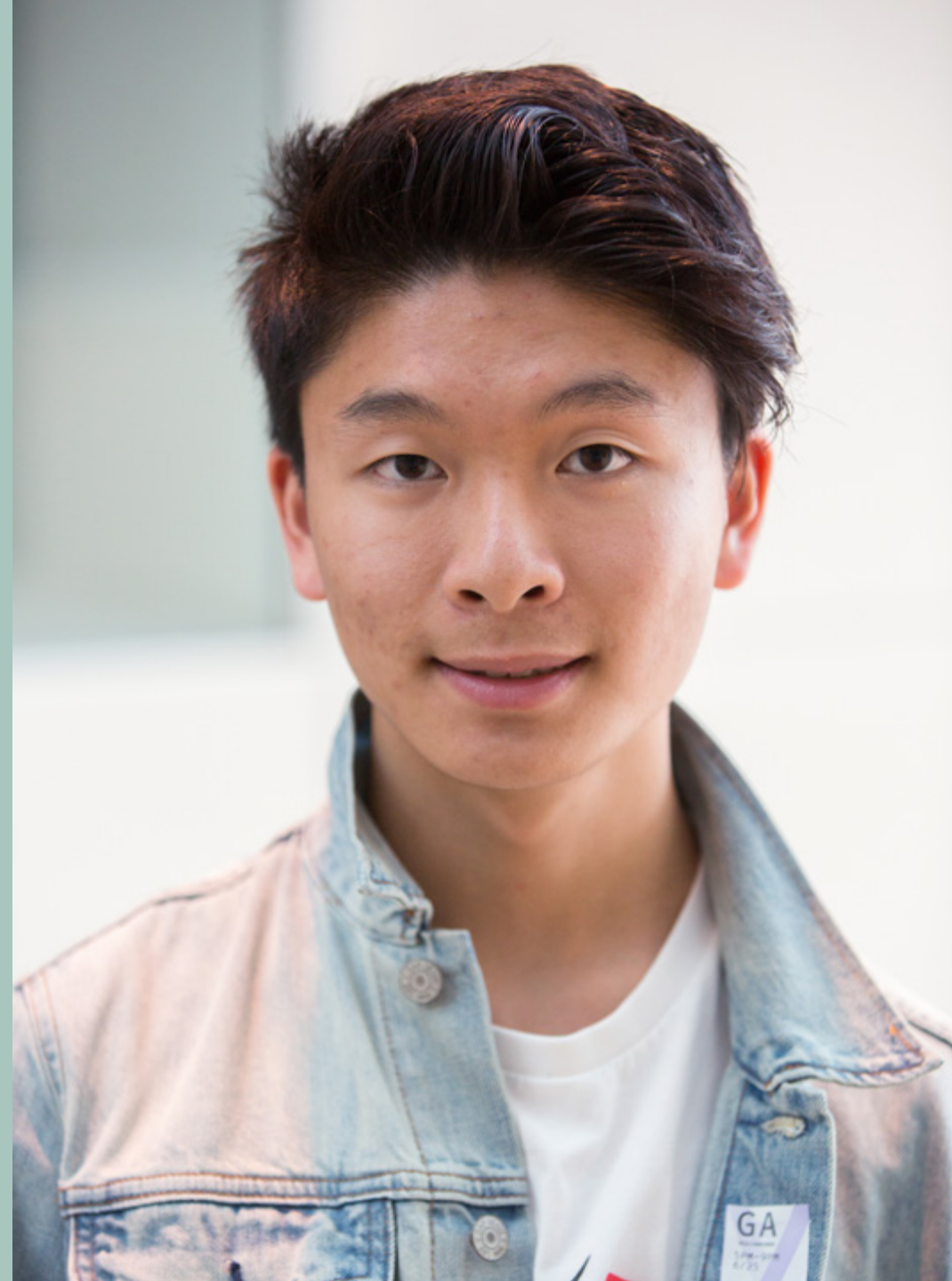
“I find it unfortunate that kids so young have to experience violence and that they’re having a hard time moving to America. And they shouldn’t be having any trouble living in America because the reason they moved here was to be free.”

JACKSON YOUNG, STUDENT

*Pictured with Russell Leong, Marisa Leong,
and Sherlyn Leong*

“Currently, with all the San Francisco gentrification and tech companies coming in, it is a lot harder for immigrants of low-income families to live here and it is really forcing only the rich people to have a place to live in San Francisco.”

JUSTIN YEE, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR



“Our cousin is an undocumented immigrant here, and it is a pretty tough situation. He came here because his mom and his sister are here, and he doesn’t have a dad, his dad died. The family obviously wants to stick together. His mom and his sister are both legal here, but he is not, and so the family has a lot of tough questions to answer. Is it worth it for him to stay here when he can’t really go to college or get a good job? Or should he go back to India, where he can probably get a better education and a better job but then the family can’t be together? I think sometimes we don’t realize how close these issues are to us.”

DEEPTI DOSHI, FACEBOOK EMPLOYEE

*Photographed on pages 32–33 with siblings
Viraj Doshi and Neeti Doshi.*

Opposite page: MARY GREGORY, PHILANTHROPY



“We are a nation of immigrants. We work hard. As an immigrant myself, we work really hard to get to the top. We are people that can succeed, can persevere, and we will always be a group of people that have helped this country succeed.”

SOU SAEPHAN, NONPROFIT EMPLOYEE



“Growing up in San Francisco, and working at SF General, I have seen a lot of families with a lot of hope that have immigrated to this country. As a city, we have built our identity around the fact that we have been open to having immigrants. But I think we have a long way to go to make that hope a reality for a lot of families here, especially kids who have come. I think they need a lot more support than they are currently getting, just all around from everyone in the city.”

MATT PANTELL, PEDIATRICIAN
AT UCSF AND SF GENERAL



“I feel a sense of helplessness and a lack of knowledge around what I can do as a physician when I come in contact with immigrants. Often they are living in poverty and I don't know the resources that are available to help them. I also don't know the legal implications of how to help them stay in the U.S. and thrive.”

JESSICA NEELY, PEDIATRICIAN
AT UCSF AND SF GENERAL

“Being an immigrant myself—I migrated to California from Iran in 1977—I’ve always been open to diversity. I welcome any type of migration. All the changes that are happening in San Francisco with a lot of new people coming in the past couple of years are actually very exciting for me.

HADI TABATABAI, ARTIST





exit surveys



I learned tons.
 I was surprised to recognize
 common threads AND
 interesting contrasts.

1. In a few words, describe your experience tonight.

Different, Fast, Awakening.

I didn't know that this could be an
 art project.

Earned. Open. Energized.

"we are all immigrants"

It would be great to talk to immigrants directly.

3. If you could influence the project we are building in any way, how would you like to influence it? (This could be values you want to see manifested in the work or particular topics we should address. What pitfalls can we avoid? What would make it feel successful to you? Are there ways in which a project like this would be useful to you? Any suggestions you have will be very helpful to us.)

I'd love to come away feeling that participants were proud of San Francisco because of the diversity and the talent and thoughtfulness that people put into their work and their lives here.

I don't really know what the plans are, but I guess I'd just say to try to get a wide range of voices. Not just people who will come to a museum, and ^{maybe} even not just people who will show up to community organizations.

We need MORE time
for ~~to~~
conversation.

CURATOR'S NOTE

At the Open Engagement Conference 2016, in Oakland, CA, a panel of institutions working with socially engaged artists described their approach to collaboration. They set the tone for this work, they said, by asking, “What can we accomplish together that each of us could not do alone?”

In 2014, I came across the work of Eliza Gregory, and invited her to begin collaborating with the Asian Art Museum. We began by creating an event for the Artists Drawing Club, a program series which invites artists to utilize the museum as a platform for new work. Eliza and I discussed the possibilities of what her project might be and which facet of the museum it could address. My invitation was premised on two questions I have: One, what does a long-term, artist-driven, socially engaged project look like in the context of the Asian Art Museum? And two, what might happen if the museum considered recent immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers a key constituency it serves? The collaboration was designed to provide both of us, and the institution, with an opportunity to think about how the museum can be a force for change.

This provocative and challenging proposition only became a possibility through my discovery of Eliza's work. Her past projects like *The Local* and *Massive Urban Change* gave me insight into her artistic practice and areas of interest. I am struck by Eliza's intelligence and her thoughtful, dedicated, and sensitive approach, all of which made these projects powerful and meaningful artworks. Many of Eliza's projects fall under social practice, a term that refers to art which engages the public sphere through collaboration with people, communities, and institutions, often with an eye toward social change. Social practice has deep roots in political art, community arts, and relational aesthetics and I am interested in the type of work that unpacks important social issues through building relationships.

With *Testimony*, I wanted to plunge our audience into the ideas, questions, and issues around immigration. I thought about the impactful way Eliza works and asked her, “How can we design an event that makes your artistic process visible right from the beginning? What if we kick off the *Testimony* project with a public event that brings people into the research that would normally

precede a project?" So that's what we did. She designed a structure for the experience, and connected with a wide variety of leaders in San Francisco within the diverse space of immigration services. Through their generosity—they have given us their time, shared their experiences and insights, and cheered us on—the evening became a rich exchange between an open hearted audience and a group of remarkable professionals, beneath the soaring ceiling of Samsung Hall. This publication presents some of the results of this event and research. It's a product we could only have made together.

*Marc Mayer, Senior Educator of Contemporary Art,
Asian Art Museum*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Asian Art Museum has been a major force behind the development of this project, in all of its forms so far. The work has been incubated and supported through the Artists Drawing Club, with events in June 2015 and June 2016, and this year Szu-han Chen, Marc Mayer and I jointly sought support for the project, and received a California Arts Council Artists Activating Communities Grant. Indra Mungal contributed a great deal to our first event, and continues to lend her connections and support to the project. David Lei helped connect me to many of the service providers featured in this document and in the kickoff event, and has also spent a number of hours thoughtfully educating me about many different aspects of immigration in San Francisco.

Marc Mayer is the backbone of this institutional collaboration and has inspired many of the most meaningful aspects of the project so far. His patience, enthusiasm and kindness have astonished and inspired me. His faith in me, my work and our ability to do something exciting together are making me a better artist. His Artists Drawing Club series is a visionary program that advances the interests of the institution, while supporting artists in a challenging city, while helping to produce important new artistic work, while also leveraging the resources of the institution on behalf of new audiences and communities. He is pretty rad.

The service providers who donated their time to this event and this publication have educated me, inspired me, humbled me, and made me feel proud to live here in San Francisco (even while alerting me to many of the problems we are facing—or not facing—as a region.) Rita Mah, Sarah Wan, Vincent Pan, Ana Herrera, Marisol Romero, Alden Blair, Kaveena Singh, Sarah Farnsworth Torres, Neeti Doshi and Philip Nguyen: I salute you and your work. Thank you so much for being the heart of this first phase of the project.

Olive Kersey stepped in and saved this project and our timeline from being imaginary. She conducted many of the interviews featured here, and was the content wrangler for this publication.

Quincy Stamper did a gorgeous job photographing the event, as you'll see, and recording short interviews on the fly. He went out on a limb and tried something new for me.

The participants who put themselves in my hands were very brave. Many of them said on arrival that they had no idea what they were attending. My allergist, Dr. Russell Leong, and his family came. My mom and dad came. My mother and father-in-law came. My colleagues and friends came. Many clients of the different organizations featured came. I am so grateful for your attention and participation.

And the project all started from a conversation with my friend Brittany Blockman, who first said "There are all these Central American families coming into the clinic having been through incredibly difficult things and no one in the city seems to know they're here!" She graciously invited me to shadow her one day on her rounds at San Francisco General, and connected me with many of her colleagues there and at UCSF.

To all of these people:

Thank you

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Testimony Project is the work of Eliza Gregory.

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Production assistance and interviewing assistance by Olive Kersey.

Graphic design by Taryn Cowart.

Photographs by Quincy Stamper and Eliza Gregory.

June 2016



Eliza Gregory is an artist and educator. Her work illuminates diverse experiences in a given community using images, relationships, interactions, interviews, events, and many other media. Her work asks questions about how to build healthy communities; the role of cultural adaptation in contemporary society; and how family relationships shape our lives. Trained as a fine art photographer, a creative writer and a social practice artist, Eliza lives and works in San Francisco.

