

Love & Justice

continuing the “fight for the underdog” - Eva Lowe

Eva Lowe Fellowship for Social Justice Graduation Program Book

August, 21, 2010

Eva Lowe is a longtime progressive community activist who has committed her life to serving the community, she turns 101 this year. Born in Fort Bragg, California in 1909, Eva was the fourth child of five girls. Her mother passed away when she was young and her father was a cook at a lumber mill. Throughout her early life, she and her family went back and forth to China for education and to support the anti-imperialist movement. She was inspired by China’s movement and the women’s rights movement and got involved in many progressive issues.

In 1926 she was a part of her high school’s Chinese Student Association and made “soap box” speeches in Chinatown to condemn foreign aggression in China. In the 1930’s during the Great Depression, Eva became involved with Huaren Shiye Hui (Chinese Unemployed Alliance), a predecessor organization to the Chinese Progressive Association. Returning to China in 1937 during China’s war with Japan, Eva volunteered at the China Defense League for Madame Sun-Yat Sen. In 1941, Eva and her family returned the United States to settle in Oakland and to start a small grocery business. Later her family became well known philanthropists and community leaders.

After retirement, she volunteered for over 15 years at the Chinese Culture Center, the Chinese Hospital, and UC Moffitt Hospital. Eva has dedicated her life to social and economic justice and believes that people should work to end imperialism and “fight for the underdog” – the poor and working class community.

The Eva Lowe Fellowship for Social Justice provides a unique opportunity to a new generation of activists and organizers who want to build the power of and improve the lives of the working class Chinese immigrant community.

During ten weeks of intensive training, ground work and reflection, Eva Lowe Fellows will learn about and support Chinese immigrant struggles in San Francisco, work to connect the larger API Movement across the country and build lasting relationships with peers, mentors and community members.



Fellows meet with Eva Lowe at her home in San Francisco Chinatown.

**Her message:
Stay True to Your Values. Stay True to Your Principles.**

Program

4:30 Welcome and Introductions

5:00 Recognition of Fellows

5:30 BBQ Dinner

Special Thanks to Warren Mar and Susan McDonough, our gracious hosts

Victoria Yee

"The experience has influenced the way I see the world, helped me envision what kind of future I want to see..."



Hometown: Westminster, California

Victoria W. Yee is the daughter of immigrant parents, the little sister of a recent college grad, and an incoming sophomore at Stanford. She applied for the Eva Lowe Fellowship because she believes in empowering individuals and communities. Growing up in Westminster, CA, a heavily low-to-middle class immigrant community, she has seen and experienced the challenges that many face. Victoria knows that there will always be support in the struggle, and that she will be part of this support. She hopes that through the experience, she will be better able to serve her family and community.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

Being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship has been amazing. The experience has influenced the way I see the world, helped me envision what kind of future I want to see, and has guided me into thinking more critically into what I can do, and how I fit into, the broader movement.

When I entered college, I was already interested in public service and social change. However, I really did not know how I was going effectively do that or what avenues to take. Then, I started getting involved in student activism. The Eva Lowe Fellowship has really helped give me a good foundation to base and ground my work, as well as be more intentional and strategic in campaigning and coalition building at campus.

Furthermore, the fellowship has allowed me to meet and network with wonderful people who not only are at the forefront of the progressive Asian American movement, but also are extraordinarily dedicated to educating and helping those who are younger.



Alice Tse

"Being a part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship has meant challenging myself to put theory into practice, to recognize and deconstruct fucked up shit and to be empowered to do something about it."

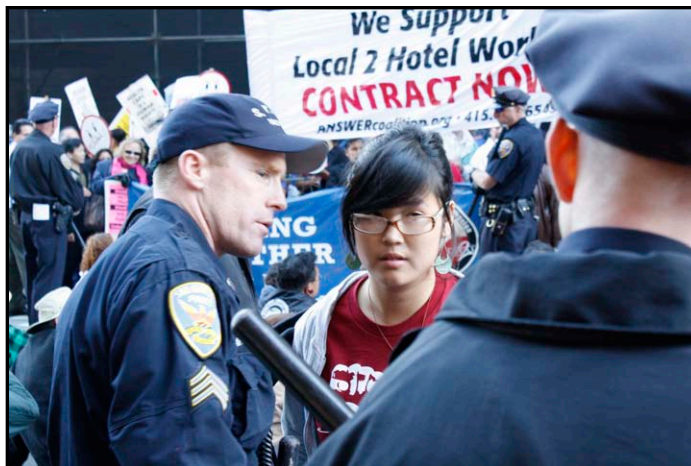


Hometown: Los Angeles, California

Alice is entering her fourth year at UC Berkeley as an Ethnic Studies major. She is currently the managing editor of *hardboiled*, UC Berkeley's only Asian Pacific American newsmagazine and is an intern at the Asian Pacific American Student Development Office. She was drawn to Chinese Progressive Association's Eva Lowe Fellowship because she felt it would help ground her and allow her the opportunity to connect and help her own community. Growing up in a working class immigrant household in LA, five minutes from Chinatown, she recognized the inequities of our society and the struggles of immigrant families when she was younger, but found the means to articulate and contextualize them in college. Though the education she has received and the organizing she has done really empowered and politicized her, she often struggles to share her passion for social justice with her family and to make it relevant to them due to culture and language barriers (though her mother has expressed approval and excitement for her fellowship with CPA!). She would like the Eva Lowe Fellowship to help her learn, grow, inspire, and to be inspired, as she does with everyday life.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

Being a part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship has meant challenging myself to put theory into practice, to recognize and deconstruct fucked up shit and to be empowered to do something about it. It has meant seeing activism as a necessary full time job and not just something I do in college other than academics. It has meant grounding myself in politics and a community that I can personally and deeply identify with. In the process, I have met some of the most down, beautiful, intelligent, and just straight up amazing folks that have helped me grow (oh so much) as an activist and as a human being.



Alvina Wong

"It has meant really defining, questioning and redefining who I am, where I'm going, what I stand for, who I stand with and how I am/will be contributing to 'the movement.'"



Hometown: Redmond, Washington

Alvina previously worked as a volunteer for Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS), a Seattle-based non-profit agency. She remembers thinking to herself, "Where have I been? These are the people I want to work with!" Her years growing up as an American-Born Chinese of immigrant parents were worth more than she expected - she could help Chinese elders find housing, fill out applications, and make them feel more welcome in a distant land. With her peers she could relate with their struggles in school, finding friends, and challenges with understanding adults, parents, family members. After reading the description for the Eva Lowe Fellowship, she thought it was a perfect opportunity to expand her

knowledge of immigrant issues. It would also be the first time that she would specifically be working with Chinese immigrants. She hopes that the Eva Lowe Fellowship can help her contribute to forming need-based, community-driven solutions. Additionally, she hopes to strengthen her skills in communication, social media and community organizing. She's excited to be in a place rich in culture and diversity as well as community organizing and movement building. She hopes this experience will eventually apply to the work she wants to do in her hometown of Seattle, WA, and equip her with the tools needed to address the challenges Asian Pacific Americans face.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

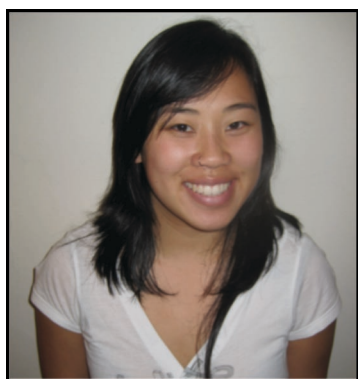
Everything. It's been such a door and eye-opening experience! And i feel really honored to have been a part of it. Being a part of this fellowship has also meant pushing me out of my comfort zones, challenging me to further question my opinions/perspectives and what I know to be "truths, and reconnecting with the Chinese immigrant community. It has meant really defining, questioning and redefining who I am, where I'm going, what I stand for, who I stand with and how I am/will be contributing to "the movement".





Connie Huang

"It meant connecting myself back to the working-class Chinese immigrant community"



Hometown: San Francisco, California

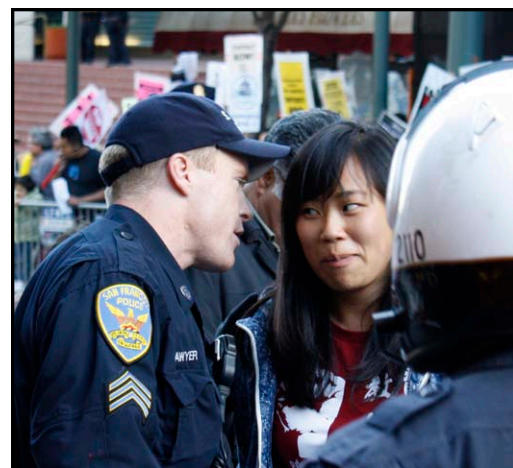
Connie is a proud San Franciscan who loves playing volleyball, snapping pictures of friends in the most unattractive times, and stuffing her face with egg tarts. A recent graduate of UC Berkeley with a Linguistics major and Education minor, she is pursuing her passion as an educator for underserved youth to inspire and empower them. As a second generation low-income Chinese American, she's seen her parents struggle to support her family with labor-intensive jobs. Reflecting on the challenges they faced, the historical injustices impacting the Asian/Pacific Islander community, and the empowering work that

grass-roots organizing does, Connie became very passionate in workers' rights and the injustices that often occur.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

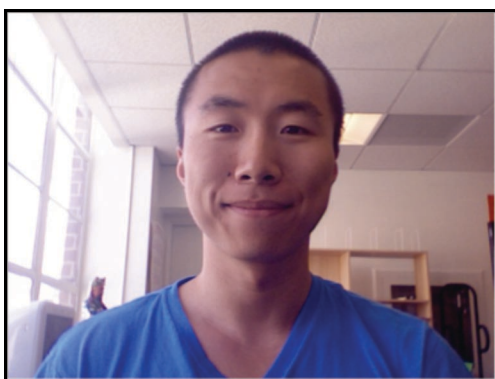
It meant connecting myself back to the working-class Chinese immigrant community- an identity that I did not ground myself enough in while growing up in San Francisco. It wasn't until I left and went to college that I wanted to dig deeper into the roots and struggles of our people. I've been involved in many organizations and coalitions at UC Berkeley that don't discuss issues in the Chinese immigrant community, and I sometimes got a feeling of invalidity when I brought up struggles that my family has faced. It was pretty silencing, but the Eva Lowe Fellowship has allowed me to be among other Chinese folks of all ages who are really passionate and recognize the importance of empowering the Chinese immigrant community. This fellowship has also given me a taste of the power in organizing impacted communities at a grassroots level and how that looks like.

I was exposed to multiple layers of social change that I would otherwise not experience. From door-knocking in the SRO's to get Chinatown residents to sign the petition for Hotel Tax initiative, to coordinating CPA members and staff to attend the Local 2 civil disobedience/rally, I've recognized the depth of work that needs to be done in order to move a community and to fuel a movement.



Ken Wang

"Looking back on the four months that I have been in the Bay Area, I can truly say that the experience has been transformative for me both politically and personally."



Hometown: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Ken decided to apply for the Eva Lowe Fellowship because he has interest in social justice and anti-racist work within the Chinese community. He believes it's really important to situate his politics in the context of the struggles of the Chinese community. Ken chose to work specifically at CPA because as a Chinese immigrant, he feels CPA affords him the opportunity to work with people he has shared experience with. He hopes that, by being a Fellow, he will have the opportunity to learn and take part in struggles faced by the local

Chinese community, as well as contextualize and gain a better understanding of the rich history of activism in Chinatown. He hopes to use the skills gained to organize within the community and fight economic, social and racial oppression wherever he ends up.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

From the opportunity to work with badass Chinese activists to working in an organization that breathes life into the grassroots, anti-imperialist, anti-racist politics that I had only read in books, this fellowship has been a truly memorable experience. This fellowship has been a great opportunity to develop my own politics as a Chinese immigrant as well as a better understanding of the struggles in the Chinese community. Looking back on the four months that I have been in the Bay Area, I can truly say that the experience has been transformative for me both politically and personally. I could not have imagined a better transition from student activism to community organizing than what the fellowship offers and I am grateful for all the wonderful people that I have met along the way.



Stephanie Chan

"I loved the energy, the strength of conviction, and the drive that I felt every day at the office."



Hometown: Brooklyn, New York

Stephanie is a native Brooklynite who became transplanted to the Bay Area when starting college at Stanford. She is currently a junior majoring in Urban Studies. Coming from a working-class Chinese immigrant family, she has always felt blessed to have access to education and nearly boundless opportunities, but at the same time was dissatisfied by the relatively fewer avenues of social and economic mobility available to the older generation of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. In high school, she started working with the Chinatown Literacy Project in New York, which provides free ESL education for Chinese adult immigrants. Tutoring with CLP strengthened her passion for providing resources for the working-class Chinese immigrant community, as well as made me more aware of the larger activist movement in all sorts of

underprivileged urban communities. She hopes to also develop her skills in community organizing and advocacy. She hope to use the skills gained as an Eva Lowe Fellow to pursue a career in community advocacy or local economic development in low-income neighborhoods.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

A lot of education. I've never interned at an organization that had a fellowship/internship program before, and I really noticed the difference this summer with CPA's newly launched program. Not only have my peer fellows kept me motivated in my work but they have also pushed me intellectually and politically. Furthermore, I loved that we institutionalized reflection and dinner conversations. Usually, those are things that we wouldn't schedule time for out of our busy schedules, but they add so much to the learning and internship experience. ELF for me has also meant getting to know a very unique organization staffed by kinds of folks I have never encountered before. I loved the energy, the strength of conviction, and the drive that I felt every day at the office.



Sincere Justice

"Being apart of the Eva Lowe fellowship has meant that we are the folks who carrying the legacy of social justice on in Eva Lowe and in our own names."



Hometown: Baldwin Park, California

Sincere Justice Wong was born same day Jack Kerouac was, except in the 80s. He grew up in the city of the Double-Double and Animal Style Fries - Baldwin Park as well as San Gabriel. Growing up, he began to notice economic inequality and a lessened quality of education in Baldwin Park. That realization helped spark him into working with community through youth, immigrants, arts, direct action and a variety of other means. He hopes to learn about the various dynamics it takes to organize a successful campaign and overall knowing ways to keep movements relevant and sustainable. He will use the skills learned from the Eva Lowe Fellowship to organize communities home and abroad to make them more equal and just - specifically with

people of color, youth, and immigrants. He will share his knowledge with others in hopes they will create communities, where life will thrive in a shared awareness and action.

What has being part of the Eva Lowe Fellowship meant to you?

Being apart of the Eva Lowe fellowship has meant that we are the folks who carrying the legacy of social justice on in Eva Lowe and in our own names. For me, it has been an experience help better my understanding how social change really works, what necessary elements are needed to spark change into a better world for all – the balance of services, organizing, education and so forth. I really feel like I understand how it really works now. I also appreciated the open dialogue and especially variations in view on how to 'make change.'

Though I worked with the youth component, as I began to build relationships with folks in Worker Center, I wanted to discover and find out more about worker related concerns and their lives. Though, I've eaten in Chinese restaurants all my life, I never realized how much exploitation occurs in the industry.

It has also meant further strengthening relationships with those I work around – I definitely feel closer to most of the fellows through our interaction. I oft wonder if you purposely picked people from all over the country so that we could visit each other.

In short, the ELF has had a great impact on my development of social change.

