



NSRCFUND NEWSLETTER

COMMEMORATE THE PAST - EDUCATE FOR THE FUTURE

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NSRCF'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED IN OAKLAND

LARGEST AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIPS EVER AWARDED

June 20 was a gorgeous day in the Bay Area and a fitting way to celebrate this year's scholarship recipients and the 35th anniversary of the Fund. \$53,500 was awarded to 50 outstanding students. The year and a half long process was expertly guided by committee co-chairs Don Misumi and Rattana Yeang, and culminated with over 125 people from all over Northern California gathering at the Tilden Campus in Oakland to congratulate this year's awardees.

It was wonderful to see so many recipients with their proud parents, siblings and friends. Rattana MC'd the program along with Ann Okahara who was on the Bay Area scholarship committee in 1983, the first time the NSRCF was in California and the first time scholarships were awarded. Rattana welcomed all and recognized that 2015 was a big year - the 35th anniversary of the Fund, the 40th anniversary of the "fall of Saigon," and perhaps most fittingly, June 20th was "World Refugee Day." He also pointed out that while we were there to praise the accomplishments of this year's awardees we should not forget that Asian Americans are not the "model minority." Young Southeast



Asian Americans continue to face many barriers in seeking to better their lives, including getting a college education. Phuoc Le and Jean Hibino extended warm greetings and words of advice from the board of directors, and board members Jim McIlwain, Islanda Khau Naughton and Keith Schuricht also attended.

The program began with a beautiful "blessing dance" performed by the Khmer Youth of Modesto. Other highlights included a high energy performance by Oakland artist Cody Saephan. Cody uses spoken word to express and share his experiences growing up in Oakland and his Mien community. Two awardees, Dallas Vue and Sherry Liang, spoke on behalf of this year's recipients (excerpts of their talks are

in this newsletter). Emily Murase, Tara Mochizuki and Jean Hibino presented the awards to the recipient of each of their parents' scholarship funds (Kenji Murase, Hisaye Hamaoka Mochizuki, and Nobu and Yosh Hibino). It was a poignant way to honor very special people. Wilma Chan of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, in presenting the Fund with a Board Resolution, encouraged the students to stay involved, or get involved, in struggles for justice and equality. At the program's conclusion recipients were encouraged to give "shout outs" to anyone and several got up to thank their parents, "You were refugees who suffered so many hardships, I've come to really appreciate all you've

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35TH ANNIVERSARY IN OAKLAND *contd.*

done for me,” “Thank you for all your sacrifices,” “I had a bad accident at my part time job and was in the hospital for 40 days and my mom came all the way from Japan to help me, I am so grateful.” And last but not least everyone was treated to fabulous Laotian and Thai food from Champa Garden. There was so much food no one needed to cook dinner that night.

The long journey from 1942 to the present was represented by several NSRCF supporters in attendance with ties to the WWII National Japanese American Student Relocation Council: Shelley Kurata (see her article), Trudy Hiraoka, Marty Uyeki, Ann Tamaki Dion, Ken Yamashita, Judy Nakadegawa,

Amy Iwasaki Mass and Chizu Iiyama. Their presence made the event very meaningful.

Kudos to the local scholarship awards committee for a wonderful job! Co-chairs Don Misumi and Rattana Yeang, William Chit-Muang, Jeff Chu, Barbara Kitagawa, Pam Matsuoka, Tara Mochizuki, Theresa Montemayor, Anne Okahara, Pysay Phinith, Aleta Rattanasith and Erni Tayabas-Kim willingly stepped forward to devote more than a year of their time, energy and hard work



(left to right) Wilma Chan, Rattana Yeang, and Don Misumi

to ensure a successful outcome. The board of directors depends on the volunteer local committees to carry out the Fund’s mission and we are so grateful for it.

event photos credit: William Chit-Muang

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD

Dear NSRCF supporters and friends,

As we celebrate the Fund’s 35th anniversary we take the time to appreciate all who supported the Fund’s mission and work throughout the year, allowing us to provide educational opportunities for students in Northern California.

This year’s scholarships were awarded in Oakland on June 20th. MANY THANKS to co-chairs Don Misumi and Rattana Yeang and their stellar committee: William Chit-Muang, Jeff Chu, Barbara Kitagawa, Pam Matsuoka, Tara Mochizuki, Theresa Montemayor, Anne Okahara, Pysay Phinith, Aleta Rattanasith and Erni

Tayabas-Kim. The hard work, energy, long hours, attention to the smallest detail and creativity of the group guaranteed the awards process and program would be a huge success. \$53,500 in scholarships were awarded to 50 exceptional students. The board of directors is very appreciative of the all-volunteer local awards committees who step forward year after year. 2015 was no exception. This year the committee made sure that the Fund’s 35th anniversary would be extra special. Five members of the board of directors attended the awards ceremony, happy to join the parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, and supporters in celebration of this year’s recipients. (See separate article.)

To date, the NSRC Fund has awarded 865 scholarships totaling nearly \$860,000. The board of directors remains an all-volunteer group. We are committed to keeping operating costs to a minimum so that gifts to the Fund go primarily towards scholarships. (The NSRC Fund’s financial statement is made available upon written request.) As of July 12, 2015 the Fund stands at \$1.6 million dollars.

In April the board welcomed its newest (and youngest) member, Laura Misumi. She is an attorney in Washington, DC serving a fellowship with the Service Employees

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International Union. She says, "I am honored to follow in the footsteps of my grandparents, parents, and cousin in their service to the NSRCF, and to pass on the legacy of the WWII National Japanese American Student Relocation Council to future generations." Also in April, the board reluctantly accepted the resignations of Margie Yamamoto from the board of directors and Maureen Kobayashi from the Investment Committee. Margie has been with the Fund for ten years, first as a supporter who created our new brochure and then as a board member who led the overhaul and complete redesign of the Fund's website, including its content. Margie brought to the board her considerable artistic and writing skills, development and fundraising expertise, and extensive connections to the Asian American community. Maureen was the guiding force on the Investment Committee for over 15 years. She was instrumental in making several key proposals to the board, and her research was always extensive and laser sharp. She generously stepped forward to serve in a time of need, kept the board well informed by taking the time to explain committee recommendations and complex concepts, and kept the Fund moving forward. Thank you so much Margie and Maureen!

The Dr. Kenji Murase Scholarship was established with the help of his three children, Emily, Miriam and Geoffrey. Their generous gifts made it possible to provide the initial \$2,000 Murase scholarship award at the June awards ceremony. (See separate article.)

The Fund was contacted by Hiroyuki Kotake, Washington Bureau Chief of NIKKEI Newspaper expressing interest in writing about the Fund. He interviewed board member Yutaka Kobayashi.

We were thrilled when his article was published on June 14, 2015, "Ongaeshi for a Better Future by Nisei Japanese Americans." The newspaper has a daily circulation of 3 million.

The 2016 scholarships will be awarded in the Greater Chicago area. Thank you to Michael Takada and Ngoc-Diep Nguyen who agreed to co-chair the awards committee. They have already been meeting with a group of dedicated and enthusiastic folks. We are confident it will be a successful outcome.

Board member Dr. Phuoc Le was front cover featured in the Spring 2015 Issue #20 of the UCSF Dept. of Medicine's *Frontiers of Medicine* story: "Healing the World: Training Global Health Experts." Phuoc and Dr. Sriram Shamasunder founded the HEAL (Health, Equity, Action and Leadership) initiative at UCSF (healthinitiative.org). Congratulations!



Phuoc Le and Jean Hibino with 2015 scholarship recipient

SPECIAL RECOGNITION to David Aman of Hanover, NH who is in charge of the Fund's database, mailing list and in general, keeper of the information. David has been with us for over 15 years. We cannot do our work without you.

And last but not least, thank you to the Fund's supporters. Your unwavering belief in the mission and work keeps us going. We look forward to the coming year.

With thanks,
 NSRCF Board of Directors
 Paul Watanabe, *President*
 Stephen Y. Hibino, *Treasurer*
 Jean Y. Hibino, *Executive Secretary*
 Kesaya E. Noda, *Recording Secretary*
 Islanda Khau Naughton
 Yutaka Kobayashi, Awards Committee National Liaison
 Phuoc Van Le
 James McIlwain
 Laura H. Misumi
 Keith Schuricht
 May O. Takayanagi
 Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2015 NAMED SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

MICHI NISHIURA WEGLYN SCHOLARSHIP



Chanhty Kim Borisouth (Sacramento) is Laotian-American, and growing up in a poor neighborhood he has lived

with both a lack of resources and others' negative perceptions of him. Despite their doubts and low expectations, Chanhty pushed himself through school and toward opportunities such as this scholarship. He is grateful for the support of his sisters, teachers, and mentors. Chanhty is a firm believer in action. All his life people have tried to hurt him with words. But it is clear now, looking at his perseverance and success, that his own actions speak much, much louder than the words of his detractors. Chanhty is attending CSU Sacramento and plans to major in computer engineering.

ALICE ABE MATSUMOTO SCHOLARSHIP



Ngoc Michelle Ha (Oakland) As a young girl, Michelle's mother would tell her stories of her family's history

in Vietnam: when the bombers flew overhead, her mother, aunts and uncles would run to the basement to hide, fearful of explosions, scared for

their lives. In spite of these obstacles, Michelle's parents immigrated to the United States, determined to provide for their children. Michelle feels that growing up with limited resources and educational opportunities made her determined to help others. She is attending UC Berkeley where she plans on majoring in Nutritional Sciences and Toxicology. She believes that going into a career of nursing will allow her to build trusting and caring relationships with patients so they can lead empowered, healthy lives.

HISAYE HAMAOKA MOCHIZUKI SCHOLARSHIP



Sabrina Hua (San Francisco) has always loved math and science, but it wasn't until she became

an officer of her school's honor and service society that she discovered her true passion for service. Sabrina planned school-wide events and joined her school's robotics team, eventually becoming the Lieutenant of Manufacturing, gaining hands-on experience with power tools and design, and learning new ways to think creatively. Sabrina is attending UC Berkeley where she plans to major in mechanical engineering with a focus on medical devices and body mechanics. Because of her strong conviction about the importance of health, she feels she will be able to make a significant impact on people's lives by applying engineering to medicine.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE SCHOLARSHIP

Sherry Liang (Oakland) is a motivated and determined young woman from Oakland who has struggled against violence in her community, lack of support from her family, her own self-loathing, and fear of taking risks. Despite these enormous challenges, she found an emotional and intellectual outlet by pushing herself to lead workshops, climb mountains, empower her peers, play soccer and volleyball, perform on stage, and teach English in Nicaragua and Peru. She is the first in her family to go to college and plans to double major in Spanish and the College of Social Studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

GLADYS ISHIDA STONE SCHOLARSHIP



Daniel Luu (San Francisco) As a first generation Vietnamese-American, Daniel's interest

in philanthropy was sparked after a service trip to Nicaragua where his club constructed a school. During the trip, he thought about his family when they were in Vietnam and this motivated him throughout the construction of the site. Earlier this year, Daniel organized a "Hugs for Ghana" book drive in his community and collected over 200 books for libraries in Ghana and Tanzania. He is attending UCLA and plans to double major in Sociology and

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2015 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS *contd.*

Business Economics. Daniel hopes to use his education to create innovative and sustainable non-profit advancements in underdeveloped countries.

HIROKO FUJITA AND PAUL FUKAMI SCHOLARSHIP



Nou Jennifer Moua
(Sacramento) proudly represents her Hmong community, her parents, and future

generations of Hmong people. She is the first generation in her family to attend college. She believes that the flaws you choose to see can become your biggest limitations, so she embraces them, using them as stepping stones to personal growth and to inspire her younger siblings and community. "Always remember that life begins at the end of your comfort zone." Nou is attending UC Davis and hopes to pursue a medical career.

KAY YAMASHITA SCHOLARSHIP



Kyle Nguyen
(Milpitas) started a local nonprofit to provide a free tutoring alternative, and then expanded the

program to include computer science for children. He also helped a group dedicated to repurposing computers for schools in developing countries acquire over 2,000 computers, impacting the lives of over 40,000 children. Kyle's interest in his home town and politics led him to manage a campaign's team in support of a community-oriented

politician. And as a future business leader, he was CEO of a simulated company in the Junior Achievement Business program, and was on the leadership team of his school's Business Academy. His passion for creating sustainable change in the world with his business acumen will continue to develop as he attends UC Berkeley.

LAFAYETTE AND MAYME NODA SCHOLARSHIP



Nhung Thi "Annie" Nguyen
(Stockton)

If there is one thing Nhung Thi has learned, it is that she will never forget her roots—they have made her into the person she is today. Nhung Thi, or Annie, was raised in Stockton with her brother and sister. With her parents' support, Annie excelled academically, but struggled to share her personal life with them. In order to cope with insecurity, stress, and loneliness, she attended summer programs such as UC Berkeley's Southeast Asian Student Coalition and ShadowNite. These helped her to grow and to learn to move past negativity. Annie is planning to study biological sciences at UC Merced and hopes to pursue a career in medicine.

AUDREY LOGAN SCHOLARSHIP



Sydney A. Nguyen
(Milpitas) is a scholar, athlete, and creative spirit with a wide array

of interests. She is ready to take on any challenge that comes her way. Whether in a classroom or on a wrestling mat, or helping her classmates reach their full potential, Sydney is strong and determined. She is also a fan of all things vintage, with a quirky personality who loves the color red. You can find her at coffee shops or the best milk tea joint in town, working out at the gym, shooting photographs in the hills, or taking funny pictures of her friends. Her serious side finds at UC Irvine, planning to major in Biological Sciences, with an eye to becoming a physical therapist.

TAMA (YOSHIMURA) AND JIRO ISHIHARA SCHOLARSHIP



Odom Ouk
(Redding)

Growing up Odom was content to stay at home reading books and playing with a handheld game system. He had a hard time meeting new people. But he broke out of his shell and graduated high school with Honors, in the top 10% of his class. He practices Tae Kwon Do to become stronger physically and mentally. He enjoys Korean dramas and likes to quote from one of them, Heirs: "One who wants to wear the crown, bears the crown." He believes this quote represents his transition from childhood to where he is today. He volunteers at the local hospital, helping visitors and patients, an experience that will serve him well in his nursing studies at Shasta College in Redding.

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2015 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS *contd.*

KAIZO AND SHIZUE NAKA SCHOLARSHIP



Ky Gia Pham
(Oakland)

When she was five years old, Ky left Vietnam with her dad and sister.

Though her alcoholic dad was barely a part of her life, her sister became both a father and mother to her and she is so grateful to her sister. Ky has decided to pursue a higher education to give back to her community and connect with people in a way she was unable to with her family. She would like to run a nonprofit community program that provides low-income students with the educational and emotional support needed to succeed in high school and beyond. Ky is attending UCLA and plans to major in Sociology and Business Economics, eventually earning an MBA.

DR. KENJI MURASE SCHOLARSHIP



Lisa Tran
(Oakland) is the enduring protagonist of her own life—no matter how many obstacles are before

her, she rises to the occasion and faces the challenge. She is determined to succeed. She loves books but loves dogs even more. Lisa is attending Lawrence University in Wisconsin and plans to major in neuroscience.

MICHIHIKO AND BERNICE HAYASHIDA SCHOLARSHIP



Tien Vo (San Francisco)

Although English is not her primary language, Tien

consistently achieved a

GPA of 3.5 or higher in high school. Among many awards and activities, she placed second in the Science Olympiad and was recognized by Adobe Youth Voice in media production. She was a leader on the prom committee, a member of the Associated Student Body, and worked for the American Red Cross. She is attending UC Davis, studying chemistry with hopes of becoming a dentist.

KOH, MITSU AND DR. KOTARO MURAI SCHOLARSHIP



Dallas Vue
(Sacramento)

is the youngest of eight children. His Hmong refugee parents instilled

in him the belief that hard work will be rewarded and that education is invaluable. He maintained above a 4.0 GPA while serving as president of the Interact Club, participating in the UC Early Academic Outreach Program, and UC Davis' TRIO Upward Bound. Dallas was recognized as a National Quest Bridge Scholar, helped his high school win the CIF Division I Regional Runner-

Up in football, and the Delta League Championship in volleyball. Dallas is attending UC Davis and will be learning about the healthcare field while pursuing a major in Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior (NPB).

NOBU (KUMEKAWA) AND YOSH HIBINO SCHOLARSHIP



Thao Xiong
(Fresno)

Born on a snowy day in the small town of Maplewood, Minnesota, Thao Xiong

is the eldest of six children. His parents arrived in the US as refugees a few years before his birth. Thao's family moved to Fresno where they could be with his mother's family. Thao always knew he wanted to serve people and resolve conflict. As a refugee of the Vietnam War, his father experienced much trauma including being orphaned early in life. The stories told and shared were often difficult for a small child to hear, but they were his family's stories. Thao feels this is why he is interested in history, world events, laws, and the decisions that affect us all. He wants to better understand how to resolve disagreements before they turn into armed conflict and change the lives of civilians, widows, orphans, and refugees. Thao feels he can do this by majoring in International Relations at American University in Washington, DC.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2015 GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!

2105 GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Elaine Cheng (Oakland)
UC Berkeley

Jeffrey Chuong (Oakland)
Diablo Valley College

Angela Hoang (Oakland)
UC Davis

Sylvia Huynh (Oakland)
UCLA

Jennifer La (Daly City)
UC Davis

Wendy La (Oakland)
UC Santa Barbara

Pang Lee (Merced)
CSU Stanislaus

Pachoua Lor (Sanger)
UC Berkeley

Yvonne Luc (Sacramento)
Sacramento City College

Anthony Nguyen (Stockton)
UC Davis

Brandon Nguyen (Gilroy)
UC Irvine

David Nguyen (Hayward)
UC San Diego

Jeffrey Nguyen (Tracy)
UCLA

Kathy Nguyen (Stockton)
UC Davis

Sydney T. Nguyen (Oakland)
Cal Poly

Trieu Thuy Nguyen (Oakland)
UC Davis

Timothy Nhingsavath (San Francisco)
UC Berkeley

Samantha Phaing (San Francisco)
City College of San Francisco

Chau Pham (San Jose)
UC Berkeley

Lyna Phan (Oakland)
UC Berkeley

Jimy Ry (San Lorenzo)
San Jose State University

Ricky Saephan (Oakland)
College of Alameda

William Teav (San Jose)
Harvey Mudd College

Xiong Thao (Oroville)
CSU Chico

Christy To (Oakland)
Peralta Community Colleges

Hoang Tran (San Francisco)
UC Davis

Nam Tran (San Jose)

Tina Tran (Oakland)
UC Merced

Martin Vang (Sacramento)
CSU Sacramento

Angelina Vuong (Santa Clara)
UC Irvine

Konou Xiong (Chico)
CSU Chico

Angela Yang (Olivehurst)
CSU Chico

Melody Yang (Sacramento)
UC Santa Barbara

Nou Yang (Olivehurst)
Yuba College

Shisha Yang (Oroville)
CSU Chico



As a 2002 scholarship recipient from Stone Mountain High School, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to accomplish my dreams over the years. Since graduation, I entered Georgia State University in the fall of 2002 with the intent of majoring in Biology. However, I quickly changed major and in 2006, I received my undergraduate degree in Respiratory Therapy. From 2006 to 2011, I worked at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta as the lead Neonatal/Adult Intensive Care Unit respiratory therapist. In 2011, I continued with my education at Emory University School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program. Currently, I am a critical care physician assistant at Emory Saint Joseph Hospital.

Looking back since high school, I once had a dream where I would pursue a career in the medical field. Now, thanks in part to your scholarship, I am to fulfill my dream as a physician assistant.

- Quynh Tran, PA-C (Atlanta, GA 2002 Scholarship Awardee)

DR. KENJI MURASE NAMED SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED

[Ed. note: NSRCF Named Scholarships are a very special category of awards that are given in memory of, in honor of, or in tribute to individuals, groups or events. They are established with a minimum contribution of \$20,000 and provide an annual \$2000 scholarship award.]

Dr. Kenji Murase (1920-2009) was the son of immigrant farmers in the California Central Valley. After graduating at the top of his class at Reedley High School, he attended UCLA, then UC Berkeley. In 1942 his education was interrupted by the forced wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. Kenji and his family were sent to Poston Camp in Arizona. In camp, he was City Editor for the camp newspaper and represented Camp III on the Poston Student Relocation Council. He was admitted to Wayne State University but was prohibited from enrolling when the Detroit City Council adopted a resolution stating that

Japanese American students were not welcome, including Kenji Murase by name.

With the help of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, Kenji finally left Poston for Haverford College and transferred to Temple University where he completed his bachelor's degree. He received his social work master's and doctoral degrees at Columbia University. In 1957 he was the first American Fulbright Scholar to Japan. In 1967 he was recruited for the new Graduate School of Social Work & Social Research at San Francisco State University where he taught for 23 years.

In San Francisco he wrote the United Way proposal to fund United Japanese Community Services, the Japanese Community Youth Council, and Kimochi, Inc., a senior services program. He also conducted community needs assessments for



planning the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California and the Kokoro Assisted Living Facility. For 22 years Kenji played a critical role on the board of directors of the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund. Kenji was married to Seiko Murase, also a social worker, for more than 40 years. Their three children, Emily, Miriam and Geoffrey, all residents of the San Francisco Bay Area, are very pleased to support a scholarship in the name of their late father.

I was a scholarship recipient in 2002. I was and still am very grateful for being chosen for that scholarship. Since graduating from Joseph Wheeler High, I have made a few changes in my career path. I believe I originally wanted to be a Pediatrician or a Pharmacist. I graduated from college with a BS in Chemistry and went on to get my BS in Nursing. My mom was a nurse as well back in Vietnam. I guess it was in my destiny to follow her footsteps. I have been practicing as an Oncology Nurse for 7 years. I am also currently back in school to get my Masters in Nursing. I hope to finish and practice as a Family Nurse Practitioner with the focus on Oncology. Thank you so much for what your foundation does for relocated scholars.

- Trang Nguyen (Atlanta, GA 2002 Scholarship Awardee)





As the 2011 Kaizo and Shizue Naka scholarship recipient, I would like to express my gratitude to the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund for giving me an opportunity to make a change in my life. This past April, I graduated from Brigham Young University-Idaho with a Bachelors in Health Science. From there, I went on to complete an internship working as a Health and Well-being intern; in which I assisted with Auburn Valley's Y.M.C.A's Cardiac Rehab program. Upon the completion of my internship, I decided to move to Utah and work for the Utah Healthcare Corps: where I conduct public education and outreach to the medically underserved community.

Education is power. I know that by furthering my education, I will achieve the career that I have so much passion for. This upcoming year, I plan to apply for my Masters in Health Promotion to pursue a career in Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health.

As a teenager, I never foresaw myself standing where I am today. The NSRC Fund is a phenomenal scholarship program that gives students and their family hope. I wish the best for this fund and hope it continues to help Southeast Asian high school students in achieving their dreams.

- Voronnique Duong (Seattle, WA 2011 Scholarship Awardee)



I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES

BY DALLAS VUE

[Ed. note: Excerpts of Dallas Vue's talk given at the 2015 awards ceremony. Dallas is attending UC Davis.]

I am Dallas Vue and I recently graduated from Grant Union High School in Sacramento, CA. I would like to thank the local Scholarship Committee, Board of Directors, and the NISEI families for all your dedication and investment in my future, and in the future of many students like me.

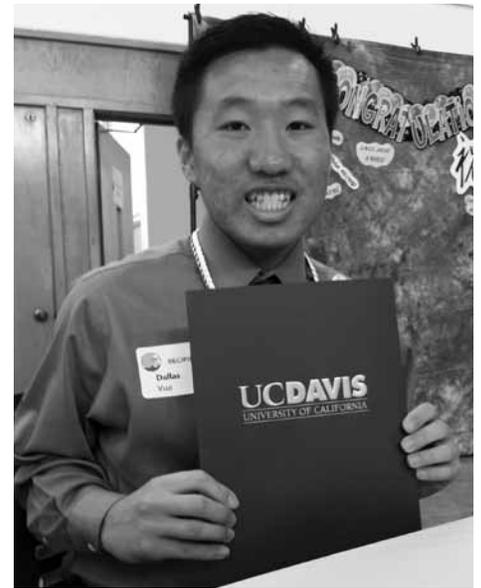
My parents always emphasize the importance of education because they lacked that aspect while growing up. They came from poor farming families in Laos where formal education was unavailable. Vastly different from my parents' experience, I grew up in the United States and received educational opportunities and a chance to have a better life than the farming life my parents left behind.

Each year I help my parents grow and sell vegetables at the farmer's market to supplement a small income for our household. I am very familiar with backbreaking pain experienced from bending down, picking vegetables,

and lifting heavy buckets all day. These experiences encourage me to earn good grades and pursue a higher education. I hope my children will not endure the uncertainties of living in poverty for years relying on welfare and living each day trying to find a way out.

I focus on excelling academically to be competitive for university admissions because I see enough bad things in my impoverished neighborhood to know they would not lead to a better future. Drugs, violence, unemployment, and poor living conditions are prevalent in my community while I observe peers at school being affected by pitfalls of gang involvement, poor academic performance, and teen pregnancy. Having discipline and building perseverance have become significant learning experiences towards my success and educational goals.

My mom's lifelong gardening activities weakened her health, leading to the early stages of Grave's disease. My mom's situation motivates me to pursue a degree in the healthcare field to obtain more knowledge about what treatments



and care she needs. My professional goal is to become a healthcare provider and inform disadvantaged communities about preventable diseases and educate them about safely using medicine.

I am very happy to be a recipient of the Koh, Mitsu, and Dr. Kotaro Murai scholarship. Without a doubt, the financial support from this scholarship will play a key role in achieving my educational dreams. Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that there is no substitute for hard work. Thank you.



OUR STORY MATTERS

BY SHERRY LIANG

[Ed. note: Excerpts of Sherry Liang's talk given at the awards ceremony. Sherry is the 2015 American Friends Service Committee Scholar.]

My name is Sherry Liang and I am a proud and recent graduate of Oakland High School's Class of 2015. I was born and raised in Oakland, CA and I am the oldest of 4 children. My mom was born in Laos and my dad was born in China. They both made their way to America for a better life and here I am now.

You can ask almost any person that was born and raised in Oakland and they'll tell you that growing up in Oakland is tough. Children are forced to mature and grow up as a tactic of survival. For some of us, we dream about staying alive the next day before we make plans for the next few years. It's important to acknowledge that it's real that not everyone has the opportunity to go out and live dreams that they set for themselves. As a Southeast Asian young woman, I'd like to share with you my story.

Stepping off the bus, I glimpse yellow caution tape wrapped loosely around the perimeter of my apartment building in early February 2013. In the distance, more caution tape blocks off the other end of the street along with the blinking red and blue lights of Oakland Police cars. The door of the illicit brothel housed in the next apartment is wide open and I

discover that my apartment building marks the place of Oakland's 10th homicide of the year. The brothel-keeper - my next-door neighbor - has been shot and killed.

The accumulation of trauma - robberies, shootings, and homicides - created an unwelcoming barrier for trust, relationships, and comfort. I became hostile and was threatened by everything around me, much like it would be in a war-zone. I isolated myself from family because my mixed Laotian, Vietnamese and Chinese culture and language barrier would not allow me to communicate the stress lingering inside of me. My parents could not support me as they dealt with their own fears such as financial instability. It was impossible to find sanctuary at home.

Eventually, due to this void I sought new experiences and found emotional outlets through involvement in programs that helped me heal. I flourished the most as a youth leader for AYPAL (Asian Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership), a non-profit community-based organization. Through facilitating workshops about controversial topics such as the cycle of violence, imperialism and patriarchy, organizing anti-violence campaigns, and recruiting and retaining more than 80 youth, I developed another perspective on my community. The sense of empowerment that I gained

motivated me to not only accept challenges, but advocate for change. Despite the circumstances that once seemed like the same yellow caution tape that triggered my fears, I have found motivation to exceed those limits. Yes. Fear has shot me down, but is also a reason to rise up. My goal is to stop violence at its root causes through community service, activism, and empowerment. I will be attending Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut this fall. I'll be studying Spanish and College of Social Studies. Through higher education, I will have the knowledge that I need to serve communities that are lacking resources to achieve their goals.

Yes, this is an amazing scholarship, but this scholarship is not only an investment in your education, it is an investment in our future. Stories like these should give us a reason to continue striving and giving the way that the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund does. Our story matters, no matter how difficult it is to tell. Those few pages in our World History textbooks do not even come close to encompassing the struggles and the contributions of our ancestors, and of course not at all when it comes to our stories as young Southeast Asians. Continue sharing your story and stand in solidarity with others. I wish all of you luck in your future endeavors. Thank you everyone.

TO THE NEXT 35 YEARS

JEAN HIBINO, NSRCF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

I am an East Coast Sansei, third generation Japanese American. The only other Sansei I knew growing up were two siblings and three cousins. My parents were Nisei, second generation Japanese American, born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. My grandparents, the Issei, first generation, came to America in the early 1900s. Executive Order 9066 sent my entire family to the Topaz, Utah concentration camp in 1942. My mom and dad got out of Topaz with the help of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council to finish their college educations. After that my dad made the intentional decision to keep moving east. He said he did not want to put his children through what his family went through during the war. That's how I ended up an East Coast Sansei.

When I was 18 I left Portland, Connecticut for college in the Midwest. And then the Southwest. And finally, Berkeley. Unbeknownst to me as I was making my way west I was “finding my identity” as it was called back in the day. What it meant to be Japanese in America. What it meant to be Japanese American.

My “reverse migration” to the West Coast lasted 15 years. The initial culture shock wore off (“they all look like me!”; different ways of doing things; different foods; the July and August dankness of foggy San Francisco made worse by no Red Sox) and gave way to an incredible, eye-popping, revolutionary political activism, community awareness,



photo credit: Alayna Bowman

experience, education and energy. As I learned more and more about the history of Japanese in America, I got more and more involved in the issues and struggles for justice and equality that affected Nihonmachi – redevelopment of the historic community; pilgrimages to the Tule Lake concentration camp; redress and reparations for the internment. It also meant going outside of Japantown – Jesse Jackson’s two runs for president, the Rainbow Coalition, affordable housing. Indeed, I found my identity and far more.

But life is about change. After the 6.9 magnitude Loma Prieta earthquake I heard New England calling me back. No, not really, it was having a kid and thinking about family. We three left the City by the Bay for Massachusetts where I jumped head first into the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund. I joined the board of directors because I wanted

to work with my mother, Nobu Kumekawa Hibino. To get to know her as more than just “Ma.”

I had the joy and privilege of working with my mother for six years. Six way too short years. I learned so much from her. She was staunchly devoted to the Fund, determined to make it grow and be a sustainable way of giving hope to Southeast Asian high school seniors. She knew tons of Nisei in cities across America, working that “Nisei Grapevine” to perfection, getting them to do all this work for the Fund. She was persistent, dogged, a force to be reckoned with. She kept in touch with recipients and encouraged (some might say badgered) Nisei to donate to the Fund. She believed in the power of a college education, coming so close herself to not finishing because of war. She knew the WWII Student Relocation

continued on next page

Council fought for the young college Nisei to get them out of the concentration camps. She lived the meaning of ongaeshi, Japanese for repaying a kindness. I think she and my dad, along with Lafayette and Mayme Noda who started the Fund with them, would be really pleased, and maybe a little shocked that the

Fund is still around and doing well after all this time.

We on the board of directors are still all volunteers. We enjoy what we do. We enjoy each other. Kesa Noda and I are honored to carry on in the giant footsteps of our parents. We don't like to admit it but we are now the "old

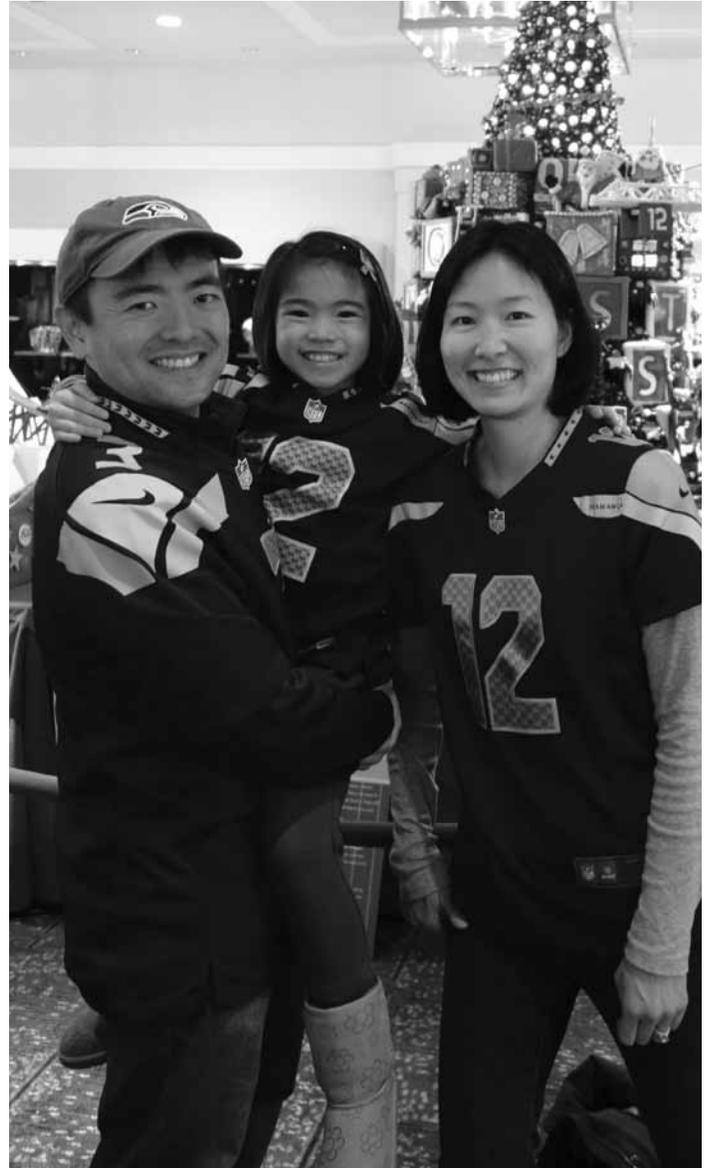
ones." We see the generational shift on the board and think it's wonderful. I appreciate that I get to work with my nephew, and this year, my daughter. I hope they share the same enthusiasm and ongaeshi as my mother did and as I now do.

Here's to the next 35 years.

After participating in the "Class of 1991" and attending the award ceremony in Seattle, I used the award to help fund tuition and expenses for my education at the University of Washington. I initially studied chemical engineering, but during my senior year, I discovered a passion for the burgeoning field of personal computing. At that crossroad, I left the engineering department and focused solely on information systems and finance. I spent my next two summers interning at Airborne Express (later acquired by DHL) and at Microsoft. I graduated in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration (concentrations in IS and Finance).

I leveraged my prior engineering experience at Microsoft and continued to work there as a consultant for a few more years before leaving to try my hand in the startup frenzy of the 2000s. I initially worked at AskMe.com as a developer, but after a year I moved to Infospace.com as a Program Manager. After the .com bubble burst, I returned to work at Microsoft where I have worked ever since. I'm currently working in the Information Security & Risk Management organization, trying to protect Microsoft against cyber threats. I now live in Bellevue, WA with my wife and our 8 year old daughter.

- Huy Phung
(Seattle, WA 1991 Scholarship Awardee)



MOVING FORWARD

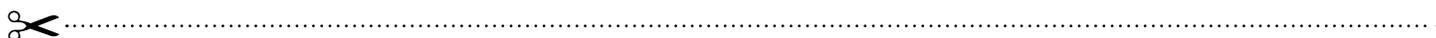
On the occasion of the NSRCF's 35th anniversary, it is fitting that Kesaya Noda wrote this year's NSRCF appeal letter. She is the Fund's recording secretary and its longest-serving director on the board. In explaining her involvement with the Fund she says, "In remembering our past, do we focus on our rage and sense of powerlessness or do we seek freedom? The means to increase our strength? Do you we focus upon ourselves as an isolated and wronged minority or, acknowledging the injustice, do we seek to move forward, linking ourselves with others who are struggling now? I became involved in the NSRCF because I felt

the need to use our understanding and our memories of the past to do good, for the sake of others and for our common human future." Kesaya is a writer who retired from Dartmouth College after ten years as an assistant to the president. Author of *The Yamato Colony* (a history of one of the earliest successful Japanese settlements in California) and a published poet, she has established a business as a personal historian - *Your Life, Your Family Stories* - to assist individuals in the writing and publication of their memoirs. Kesaya and her husband Christopher Dye run a blueberry and Christmas tree farm established by her parents, Lafayette and Mayme



photo credit: Molly Drummond

Noda. She echoes what her dad said on the Fund's 25th anniversary, "I have great hopes for the NSRCF."



NISEI STUDENT RELOCATION COMMEMORATIVE FUND, INC.

19 Scenic Drive, Portland, Connecticut 06480

www.nsrcfund.org info@nsrcfund.org

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I would like to receive the annual NSRC Fund newsletter by email: _____

MUSINGS AT 91: YUTAKA KOBAYASHI

[*Ed. note: Dr. Kobayashi, past president and longtime board member of the NSRCE, lives in Wellesley, MA with his wife Maureen.*]

I have had a very interesting and challenging life. In a nutshell, I experienced the wartime evacuation with my family, left the Topaz relocation camp for college through the efforts of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council in 1943, eventually earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry, had a productive scientific career, have three sons, suffered the traumatic loss of my wife, Martha, in 1979, and re-married in 1982 to Maureen Byrne.

Today Maureen and I are still going strong and enjoying our busy life together. The icing on the cake came at the end of last year when the U.S. Tennis Association ranked me the #1 tennis player in the country in the 90's and up age group. What a life I have had! I know I have a huge debt to pay back to society for my good fortune. The Japanese call this "ongaeshi," a person's duty to give back to society for his/her good life. My "ongaeshi" was not by design but shaped by unforeseen circumstances.

The Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund scholarship fund was established by the Hibinos and the Nodas in 1980. I responded to an early request for donations not knowing much about this group. One Christmas I received my annual card exchange from my dear friend, Kay Yamashita, who had worked for the Student Relocation Council during WWII. Kay was the one who was responsible for getting me out of Topaz in January of 1943. In

her Christmas card she expressed disappointment with the lack of donations to the young scholarship fund. I felt very bad after reading her message since I had previously only given a token amount.

At that time, a decade long campaign for redress and reparations from the U.S. government for all surviving evacuees was going on. A bill was making its way through Congress seeking to compensate each internee \$20,000 along with a formal apology from the president. I never thought that bill would succeed but I wrote Kay that if it did I would donate my award to the scholarship fund. Well, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was signed into law by President Reagan on August 10, 1988 with payments to begin in 1990. I had to honor my promise to Kay but I was still not sure about the viability of the scholarship fund and how my gift would be spent. I decided to attend one of the board meetings in Massachusetts to find out more and wouldn't you know that I left that meeting as a director!

23 years later and I am still serving on the board of directors. It is a wonderful experience to be part of this effort. The fund continues to grow and fulfill its mission to give a helping hand to Southeast Asian high school seniors, now a generation removed from the Vietnam War, so they can continue their educations. Considering the escalating costs of higher education today, our scholarship awards are minimal. However, I believe our help shows students that people unknown to them care about them and care about their futures. Our aid



encourages and supports students in whatever they aspire to be in whatever field they choose – health, teaching, law, science, and skilled trades. Education is the key to becoming a successful, contributing member of society.

I believe that the West Coast Nisei who experienced the forced evacuation, internment and rejection by their own government have shown that it is possible for children of immigrants to overcome terrible obstacles and succeed in America, that this is truly the land of opportunity. In its 35 year history our scholarship fund has supported in excess of 860 students and distributed nearly \$860,000. We are going to reach the \$1 million mark in scholarships soon. I proudly say that my time on the board of directors has given me a huge sense of satisfaction.

KEEPING THE NISEI LEGACY ALIVE

BY SHELLEY KURATA

[Ed. note: Shelley Kurata and her sister, Trudy Hiraoka, live in California. The following are excerpts of emails Shelley sent to Jean Hibino following the scholarship awards ceremony.]

My sister and I were really glad we were able to join you in Oakland for this year's presentation. I wanted to experience seeing the good works up close and personal - and how personal they were! Each and every scholarship recipient seemed so deserving and to have been able to hear their stories told was so special. It was an honor to see the good work you all do in honor of such wonderful people as your parents and so many others.

Even with the whole wartime upheaval of our Issei and Nisei families after Pearl Harbor and all the hatred and discrimination they faced, so many wonderful stories rose from such unbelievably negative odds. These stories of true survival are so awe inspiring and amazing to me and I am reminded every day that my parents lived them as I pass their many photos scattered around the house. This incredible generation of people left us so much.

I think of my mom's life and those huge upheaval changes that took place. Evacuation from idyllic home town Santa Barbara to the Tulare Assembly Center where she left ahead of her family to help make a "home" for them in the horse stalls; contracting "Valley Fever" but did the "gaman" thing; then on to Gila River,



(left to right) Shelley Kurata, Trudy Hiraoka, and scholarship recipient Sydney Nguyen

Arizona in that awful desert and dust; to meeting and marrying dad in a lasting marriage of 61 years; to a whole new East Coast world where she worked in an office by day but was a nanny, cook, housekeeper from early morning to late at night after work; to relocating back to face all the prejudices still a part of post-war Fresno, California.

The NSRCF's good works truly keep alive the history of the Nisei during the WWII years. The story is an amazing one of good people doing good work. My mom always used to say her role was nothing as she "just worked in the office," but I rather think differently. Typical Nisei, never boasting and always declining words of praise and acting embarrassed almost to the point of being ashamed of the praise, is just

how mom led her life. We daughters were so proud when we learned she was able to find a job with the WWII National Japanese American Student Relocation Council in the Philly office during the war years. Her quiet story of taking a few family members east to get out of the Gila camp at age 20 is a story just as bold and brave as our dad's 442nd Army story. Two parents left their daughters with such a legacy!

It is my and my sister's goal to see our parents' (Shim and Chiyo Hiraoka) Legacy Fund rise to the level of a Named Scholarship fund. Along with treasured family memories, the NSRCF fund established in my parents' names keep them alive in our hearts and our minds each and every single day.

NSRCF NAMED SCHOLARSHIPS, LEGACY AND TRIBUTE FUNDS

The Nisei Student Relocation Commemoration Fund's annual awards are made possible by contributions from individuals and organizations. Named Scholarships, Legacy Funds and Tribute Funds enable anyone, including organizations, to honor, commemorate or pay tribute to individuals, groups or events. If you would like information about establishing a Named Scholarship Fund (minimum \$20,000), a Legacy Fund (minimum \$10,000) or a Tribute Fund (minimum \$2,000), please contact the NSRCF: 19 Scenic Drive, Portland, CT 06480.

The following funds have been established, and are designated by who created them, * and (). The Board of Directors is grateful for the generous support these funds have received, as noted, during the period from October 1, 2014 to October 1, 2015.

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NISEI STUDENT RELOCATION COMMEMORATIVE FUND 2015 NEWSLETTER



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19 Scenic Drive

Portland, Connecticut 06480

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The NSRC Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in New England that annually awards scholarships to students from underserved communities pursuing higher education. The NSRC Fund was established in 1980 by second generation Japanese Americans, Nisei, in gratitude to the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council. The Council made it possible for the Nisei to leave the World War II prison camps for colleges and universities across the United States. The NSRC Fund encourages inter-ethnic collaboration and promotes public awareness and understanding of the forced removal and internment of 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II.