

What Does It Take to Save a Neighborhood?

San Francisco's Chinatown looks as it does today thanks to the efforts of Chinatown CDC.



INSIDE: There's still a lot of work to be done throughout the city.
Learn what this means for you!



Chinatown Community
Development Center

華協中心

Rev. Norman Fong, current Executive Director, and Gordon Chin, founding Executive Director, standing in front of the recently remodeled North Ping Yuen. They know the heart of Chinatown is its people and affordable housing.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.



Preserve and Protect

How one Bay Area nonprofit is working hard to retain the cultural legacy of Chinatown

by Thea Marie Rood

Chinatown is one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in San Francisco and renowned throughout the world. However, that stature is no accident — it has taken a lot of hard work and dedication to preserve the district and its community.

“Chinatown would not be the same if Chinatown Community Development Center hadn’t existed,” said Gordon Chin, founding Executive Director of Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC), a member of the NeighborWorks network. “Citywide, Chinatown CDC has helped advocate and educate residents, elected officials and other stakeholders about the importance of Chinatown. It can’t be taken for granted. It’s an integral place in San Francisco.”

Established in 1853, San Francisco’s Chinatown is the first neighborhood of its kind in the United States. It also embodies the legacy of seven or eight generations.

“The Chinese historically suffered a lot of discrimination and exclusion under city, state and federal law,” Chin said, who became Executive Director when the nonprofit formed in 1977. “So Chinatown is much more than just the people who live there now. There’s a spiritual nature to the place called Chinatown, a national significance.”

Reverend Norman Fong, Chinatown CDC’s Executive Director since 2011 (formerly the Deputy Director of Programs since 1990), fully understands this aspect.

“My dad came here in 1919 while there was still segregation under the Chinese Exclusion Act,” recalled Fong, who grew up in Chinatown himself. “Through my father, I learned the

Chinese not only worked on the railroad, but also on reclamation swamp land throughout California. We constructed so much. I tell the youth I work with, ‘The Chinese are part of American history — America is us, too.’”

In fact, Chinatown CDC teaches local youths this legacy by prioritizing their involvement in the community.

“What I love the most is the youth program here,” Fong said. “It creates a whole new, young generation to care for Chinatown.”

No matter what new programs get added to the nonprofit’s roster, Chinatown CDC never loses sight of the mission it started with in 1977 — tenant protection and affordable housing.

“Chinatown CDC started by fighting encroachment by the Financial District,” Fong said. “Since then, we’ve doubled in scope and become a bigger, broader, more diverse organization. And we’re not just building affordable housing, but also preserving affordable housing. We’ve remained faithful to this focus and try to think of every aspect that makes a neighborhood work.”

Chinatown CDC’s decades-long affordable housing expertise has also helped it create valuable partnerships with other area nonprofits such as Swords to Plowshares, San Francisco neighborhoods like the Mission and Tenderloin districts, and the Ping Yuen Residents Improvement Association — one of Chinatown CDC’s partners from the beginning.

“These partnerships are part of embracing diversity in San Francisco,” Fong said. “We need to work together better — the problems are just too big.”

“I would first say Chinatown would not be the same if Chinatown CDC hadn’t existed.”

GORDON CHIN
Founding Executive Director,
Chinatown CDC

FAST FORWARD

Chinatown CDC has grown a lot since its founding 42 years ago. From a small storefront operation with a handful of staff to a major nonprofit managed by a Board of up to 27 members, see how smart organization and leverage has led to explosive growth for the organization — and what that could mean for the future:

Current Portfolio

- **32 properties** owned in San Francisco neighborhoods
- Affordable housing for more than **4,500 low-income families**, adults and seniors

Housing Experience

- Developed **2,100 units** of affordable housing
- **1,100 units** under construction

Current Programs

- Planning
- Civic Engagement
- Resident Services
- Youth Leadership Development
- Organizing and Advocacy

The New Generation

Creating leaders of tomorrow who care about Chinatown today

by Thea Marie Rood

For children and young adults who participate in Chinatown Community Development Center's (Chinatown CDC) Youth Leadership Development, the experience can be life-changing.

"You see freshmen who are shy and quiet, and by the time they are graduating they've become president of the youth program or are going to City Hall to talk about pedestrian safety and how that's affecting our community," said Jennifer Chan, who is the RAD Resident Services Manager at Chinatown CDC and also an alumna of the youth program.

"The transformation over time as they become young men and women is amazing," said Chan. "When you give kids ownership and an opportunity to learn, they will surprise you and devote a lot of time and energy to what they're doing."

Chinatown CDC's youth program consists of three major projects, all youth-organized and youth-led. The oldest is the Adopt-an-Alleyway, which was started by Norman Fong in 1991 with eight students from Galileo High School. Chinatown's 40 alleyways were in really bad shape: They were covered in graffiti, dumping grounds for trash and furniture, and home to rats and other vermin. They began regular clean ups and alleyway sweeps. Since most of Chinatown's alleys were not considered city streets designated for cleaning, Chinatown CDC created the Chinatown Alleyway Master Plan to get the city to clean the alleyways. In addition to regular workathons and clean ups, AAA added a new program in 2000 called the Chinatown Alleyway Tours (CATs), which was initiated by former Supervisor Jane Kim.

"The kids decided to do the tours to give contemporary history and an understanding of why Chinatown was built the way it was," Chan said.

"When you give kids ownership and an opportunity to learn, they will surprise you."

JENNIFER CHAN
Special projects coordinator,
Chinatown CDC



A graduate of Chinatown CDC's youth program herself, Jennifer Chan knows how empowering these projects can be.

PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR

The nonprofit's Youth for Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) project puts youth in charge of social activities for the community's SRO seniors, keeping these residents engaged and motivating them to get out of the house.

"The youth come up with cooking and crafting projects," Chan said. "And they get to learn the history of their lives, especially from the seniors."

The last project, Super Sundays, is the biggest. These town hall meetings are attended by more than 1,000 community members, and help from younger participants is key for a well-functioning event.

"While the adults are in the meeting, the youth team provides child care with activities," she said. "In the past our youth have received a grant to conduct science experiments to do with the kids."

Students who come to the youth program to fulfill a school requirement or spruce up their college application, end up staying for years or never end up leaving at all.

"Obviously I'm still here," said Chan. "A lot of young people come back on staff. They believe in the heart and mission of Chinatown CDC."



EMPOWERING YOUTH

How is Chinatown CDC offering young people intensive involvement in community issues? Through one of the following programs in the organization's Youth Leadership Development:

Adopt-an-Alleyway (AAA) Youth Program

A community service and leadership program run and led by young people. Youth recruit and lead their peers in occasional neighborhood cleanups, workathons and alleyway beautification projects. They also support elderly tenants, provide recreational activities for young children and manage a community garden.

Chinatown Alleyway Tours Program (CATs)

Youth tour guides lead individuals, families, schools and groups on a trek through Chinatown's many alleyways. Routes designed by the youth themselves.

Youth for SROs Program (YSRO)

YSRO aims to provide both services to residents and learning opportunities for youth. The program uses a model that stresses youth run, youth led activities — leadership development by empowering youth to make their own decisions.

Campaign Academy

A leadership training program for young people that teaches the skills and knowledge needed to positively impact their community. Past participants have successfully advocated for the installation of pedestrian scramble crossings in Chinatown.

Jun Chang Tan, together with his wife, Qian Yan Li, son Guang Yuan and daughter Winnie live in one of the many single-room occupancy units in the densely populated Chinatown neighborhood.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.



Making Room

Chinatown CDC helps SRO residents improve housing conditions

by Anne Stokes

Imagine living in a single 8- by 10-foot room — sharing toiletries, showers and a kitchen with your neighbors. Now imagine living there as a family of four.

According to Malcolm Yeung, Chinatown CDC's Deputy Director of Programs, there are between 400 and 500 families living in single-room occupancy (SRO) units in Chinatown. The median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco: \$3,700. The average SRO rent in Chinatown in 2015: over \$1000 and rising.

"For many of these families, it's really the only affordable housing they can find when they come into San Francisco," Yeung said. "We want to keep these SROs affordable to make sure there's opportunities for families who are looking to land in San Francisco, but we're working with them and supporting them in trying to find a better alternative."

The Tans are one of these families. In 2012, Jun Chang Tan, his wife Qian Yan Li and son Guang Yuan emigrated to San Francisco from Guangzhou, China. The family has lived in an SRO ever since, also with their daughter, Winnie, who was born in the city.

Both Jun Chang Tan and Qian Yan Li work as care providers. However, even with their combined incomes, they can't afford to move into a bigger home.

"Rent keeps going up so much that our income is way below what we need to support our families," Tan said. "The dream of moving out of SROs is drifting further and further away from us. Finding housing is increasingly difficult."

Tan said his family found support from Chinatown CDC, and were connected with resources like public assistance and health care. In 2014, when the Tan family and some of their neighbors felt like they were being pushed out of their homes, Chinatown CDC community organizers helped them speak up about their situation. They ended up staying in their homes.

"Without Chinatown CDC's help, we would have poor sanitation in our building," he said. "We might have been evicted from our building and unable to find a place that we could afford."

Through the nonprofit's Grassroots Leadership training program, Tan also became an active advocate for affordable housing — joining the SRO Families United Collaborative, of which Chinatown CDC is a member organization.

"I would get involved with rallies and activities to let City Hall know that we need more affordable housing," he said. "Being part of the action is important to me. Together with our families, we would be successful."

"Finding housing is increasingly difficult."

JUN CHANG TAN
Chinatown SRO resident

LIFTING UP RESIDENTS

For many low-income individuals and families, single-room occupancy (SRO) units are their only affordable housing option. Chinatown CDC not only works to ensure these units remain affordable, it also helps connect tenants to much needed support and services through the following programs:

The SRO Hub at Woh Hei Yuen

In 2019, Chinatown CDC was awarded seed funding from Wells Fargo to create an SRO Hub at the Woh Hei Yuen Recreational Center in Chinatown. The SRO Hub will initially serve 200 low-income residents, many who are monolingual Chinese-speaking immigrants. The goal of the SRO Hub will be to provide:

- Housing counseling referrals
- Workshops on tenant rights
- Housing application assistance
- Grassroots leadership training
- Activities like flower arrangement, dance classes and yoga

Educational workshops

Knowledge can be critical for those who want to eventually transition out of an SRO unit. Chinatown CDC helps individuals and families better their situations by offering them access to important workshops such as:

- Financial literacy
- Housing counseling services (which includes tenants' rights, mediation services between landlords and tenants, translation services and more)

Support SRO residents directly by making a contribution to Chinatown CDC with the "SRO Legacy Fund" designation.

Home, Sweet Home

Ensuring residents have a wonderful place to call their own

by Anne Stokes

Xiao Ying Zhao Lin thinks of Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) as family. She affectionately calls her resident services coordinators her “precious daughters,” and they in turn gave her the name most people know her by — “Grandma Precious.”

Like millions before her, Grandma Precious, 88, came to the United States looking to build a better life. In her 50s, she left Guangzhou, China, and started anew in San Francisco in 1986. Since then, she’s lived in the city’s Chinatown neighborhood.

“All of my daily activities were in Chinatown. I not only lived in Chinatown, I also worked in Chinatown until the day I retired,” she said. “It feels like I am still connected to my hometown.”

Unfortunately, that cultural connection can be hard to form for many Chinatown residents if they can’t find and keep affordable housing in the area. According to Wing Hoo Leung, president of the Community Tenants Association, an organization that often collaborates with Chinatown CDC on tenants’ rights issues, many low-income seniors and families face the ever-present threat of eviction.

“Many seniors pay relatively cheap rent compared to the current market rate,” he said. “Landlords want to evict long-term tenants because then they can bump up the rent to a much higher price. For those who get evicted, it is very difficult for them to find a new place to live.”

That’s exactly what happened to Grandma Precious in 2011.

“All of a sudden, they wanted me to move,” she said. “I was scared and worried at that time, I did not know what to do.



If not for Chinatown CDC, Grandma Precious may not have a safe and reliable place to call home.

PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

“I am very fortunate to have had Chinatown CDC to help me when I most needed help.”

GRANDMA PRECIOUS
Tenant, Chinatown CDC

Then I remembered there was an organization that helps solve tenant-related issues, and that was Chinatown CDC.”

Grandma Precious learned through Chinatown CDC that she had rights as a tenant. Grandma Precious eventually had to move, but when she did it was to a property that was soon taken over and managed by Chinatown CDC — 990 Pacific. Chinatown CDC renovated the building, and even though residents had to relocate for a year, Grandma Precious said that Chinatown CDC’s staff made the temporary move easy. When she returned home, she said the building was completely transformed: gone were the burst pipes, vermin and mold-covered walls she had seen when she first moved in. The renovated units came equipped with new appliances, and a garden which residents could use to socialize and exercise.

“We have a beautiful environment to enjoy life in,” she said. “I am very fortunate to have had Chinatown CDC to help me when I most needed help. I really do not know what would have happened without Chinatown CDC’s help.”



CREATING ADVOCATES

Chinatown CDC’s primary goal is to give residents tools they can use to advocate for themselves through a comprehensive set of programs and support services available to all community members.

Community organizing

Chinatown CDC’s community organizing programs use forums and grassroots leadership training to help residents advocate for:

- Tenants’ rights, including protection from eviction
- The preservation of affordable residential housing units
- Improving public housing conditions

Community planning

Chinatown CDC and its residents make their voices heard in community planning on behalf of issues such as:

- Accessible transportation for residents and visitors coming into the Chinatown area
- Open space
- Preserving existing affordable housing units through zoning and planning regulations
- Program funding at local, state and federal levels

Resident Service program

Chinatown CDC ensures residents have a healthy community, not just a building to live in. This is made possible by:

- Providing help with important documents relating to health care, housing, legal issues and more
- Helping navigate public benefits
- Providing access to health care
- Supplying information and referrals to other resources

Housing Diverse Communities A

San Francisco's housing market is notoriously tough. Demand and prices are both high, as is the need for affordable housing. Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) not only gives residents a safe and reliable place to live in throughout the city, but also makes sure these spaces align with the "Beloved Community" concept — meaning they are places that value justice, equality and the love of one's neighbor!

Legend

- Property owned and operated by Chinatown CDC

Veterans Commons

"Swords to Plowshares has had the great fortune to partner with CCDC as we develop housing for veterans in San Francisco. We could not ask for a better partner."

LEON WINSTON

Swords to Plowshares chief operating officer and Chinatown CDC partner



Across San Francisco

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHINATOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER



North Ping Yuen

“It’s amazing what Chinatown CDC did to fix up the Pings to make us feel more at home.”

MYRISHA DIXON
Resident



International Hotel

“I love I-Hotel, my home forever.”

DONG YIN DENG
Resident



Tenderloin Family Housing

“CCDC helps to uplift the Middle Eastern community in the Tenderloin.”

BUSHRA ALHAKIM AND
TATIANA ALABSY
Residents





BECOMING SOCIAL

In addition to reoccurring activism events like Super Sundays, Chinatown CDC also offers residents activities that are **solely geared toward fun**, relaxation and socializing with friends. Some of the many opportunities offered are:

- Bingo
- Mahjong tournaments
- Walking Club
- Inter-property game days
- Weekly coffee hours
- Monthly birthday parties
- Centenarian party
- Great Star Tuesday Matinee Screening
- Lenora Lee Dance Workshops
- Karaoke
- Nutrition workshops and healthy cooking classes
- Chinese calligraphy classes
- Origami classes
- Knitting classes
- Gardening classes
- Sunday Arabic classes
- ESL classes
- Moon Festival potlucks
- Summer barbecues
- Fourth of July celebrations
- Parents' Day Celebrations
- Family Fun Day
- Back-to-school giveaways
- Back-to-school Celebration and Movie Night
- Mid-autumn festivals
- Holiday parties
- Black History Month celebrations
- Field trips to California Academy of Science and Exploratorium
- Field trips to the San Francisco Opera
- Art festivals and exhibits



Super Sundays were created by Chinatown CDC as a way to inspire change from within Chinatown's own community.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

A Community Engaged

by Thea Marie Rood

Monthly gathering gives Chinatown residents a voice

Super Sundays are unique to San Francisco's Chinatown, and were started by Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) in the early 1990s. What began as a small meeting quickly morphed into a monthly community event that draws hundreds of attendees. Participants talk about what is happening in their own neighborhoods — and how they can factor themselves in.

"I was Deputy Director of Programs then and we decided to hold one big, giant Chinatown convention — with all the groups we worked with all together," Norman Fong, Chinatown CDC's Executive Director, remembered of the first meeting. "Everyone was simply asked what they would like to change in our neighborhood. We came up with a great to-do list and I thought, 'We should do this every month.' It caught on so fast — people loved it."

As time went on, it wasn't just community leaders and residents attending Super Sundays.

"Pretty soon, the mayor learned of it and started dropping by, and so did other politicians," Fong said. "This is real democracy. Before this, we were missing some voices like immigrant seniors, for example. It empowers everybody. And it puts our voices on the map. City Hall knows about it, and knows it's a galvanized group that is not afraid to speak out."

Today, Super Sundays are organized into two separate but similar groups: one for the Community Tenants Association (CTA) and one for single-room occupancy (SRO) residents. Both focus on housing issues and tenants' rights, of course, but

each also provides an important flow of general information — both for the residents who attend the meetings and Chinatown CDC.

"When you're poor, you don't have a TV," said Rita Lui, who helps organize the CTA meetings during Super Sundays. "And some of our residents can't read the newspaper. We're their source for what's going on in the community."

For example, she said, during the wildfires last year, Super Sundays allowed Chinatown CDC to disseminate critical advice for dealing with the dangerous air quality, information that is especially important for seniors.

"Residents are also able to gather and give us local information we wouldn't have otherwise," said Kitty Fong, who is involved in the SRO meetings during Super Sundays. "They are the eyes and ears of our community."

The weekly event also offers a much-needed social component: Lunch is served afterward by Chinatown CDC's youth team, and frequent carnival-like Fun Days take place when there aren't holiday parties with games and gifts.

But the political engagement is what matters most.

"I wish there were more town hall meetings — I think every neighborhood in every city should have one," Norman Fong said. "Because if you don't have people engaged, the politicians and the power-brokers make all the decisions and residents' voices would be left out."

"[Super Sunday] empowers everybody. And it puts our voices on the map."

NORMAN FONG
Executive Director,
Chinatown CDC

Building Stability: One Home at a Time

A Q&A with Cindy Wu, Deputy Director of Operations
for Chinatown Community Development Center

by Anne Stokes

Q: What is Chinatown Community Development Center's (Chinatown CDC) mission?

Cindy Wu: Chinatown CDC does many things! We build affordable housing and manage it long-term to ensure it stays affordable. We do community organizing and community planning, mostly focused on Chinatown issues, but also city-wide tenants' rights and affordable housing issues.

Q: How does Chinatown CDC create affordable housing options in the community?

CW: We started the housing arm of our organization over 40 years ago by buying some buildings in Chinatown that were old and had tenants in them. These buildings were at-risk of being demolished or evicting their tenants. We've actually come back full circle to that strategy in this really hot housing market. We work with the city to buy existing buildings with tenants in them and preserve them as affordable housing. This prevents

the pattern of speculators buying a building, evicting tenants, and doing a light rehab in order to then double, triple or quadruple the price of units.

Q: Why does Chinatown CDC offer other services to residents?

CW: Housing is the foundation for stability in someone's life, but housing alone is not enough for maintaining a community. We provide resident services in all of our buildings to make sure that we are bringing people in the building together, teaching them leadership skills to help them take on issues in the neighborhood, like advocating for a park or bus or pedestrian safety. Community isn't a brick-and-mortar thing — it's about organizing, it's about being a champion for issues

**"Housing is
the foundation for
stability in
someone's life."**

CINDY WU
Deputy director of operations
for Chinatown Community
Development Center



PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

that matter to people, it's about residents having control over their own destiny and neighborhood.

Q: Why does Chinatown CDC need help from the San Francisco community?

CW: We need the political will to fund affordable housing — really fund it, not just talk about funding it. We need the willingness to look at what truly stabilizes communities and understand what lets people continue to live in those communities. It takes really trying to understand the life of someone, say two seniors living on SSI, or a family with both parents working two jobs to make it in Chinatown to understand why Chinatown CDC is a worthwhile organization to donate to with time or money. That empathy is important for all of San Francisco to be able to help support us with solutions.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to creating affordable housing opportunities, Chinatown CDC knows that giving residents a voice in public planning plays a huge role in their community's future development. Some ongoing areas of focus are:

Transportation is important to the everyday lives of residents. Chinatown CDC advocates for several key transportation projects to reduce traffic and connect Chinatown to the rest of the city:

- The Central Subway
- Chinatown Park and Ride validation program
- Pedestrian Safety Plan solutions

Open space is at a premium in densely populated urban areas. Chinatown CDC works to develop more communal spaces such as:

- Portsmouth Square, known as the "living room of Chinatown," is an important place for many residents, especially those living in SRO units.

- Chinatown Alleyways Master Plan has renovated 11 neighborhood alleyway spaces with new paving, lighting and pedestrian walkways.

Public art displays celebrate Chinatown's rich cultural history and character. Installations and exhibits include:

- The International Hotel mural
- The Art in Storefront program
- 41 Ross Alley gallery

For more information on Chinatown CDC's future plans, visit www.chinatowncdc.org.

Susie Wong and Scott Barlow are ardent Chinatown
CDC supporters who love protecting their city.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

How to Give

Every size and type of donation goes
to good use at Chinatown CDC

by Anne Stokes



To its many visitors, San Francisco's Chinatown is a bustling neighborhood, filled with colorful shops and busy restaurants. Many don't see the working poor living in cramped rooms above those businesses. However, nearly a third of Chinatown residents live below the poverty line, most are immigrants and only a minority speak fluent English. Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) is a lifeline for those residents, providing affordable housing, access to social services, health care and many other greatly needed services.

But Chinatown CDC can't do it alone. The nonprofit relies on support from community members to provide the services and advocacy residents rely on. Whether it's financial support, volunteering expertise or donating needed items, Chinatown CDC can use your help.

Husband and wife Scott Barlow and Susie Wong are local residents who are committed to that effort.

"One organization can't do it all, but Chinatown CDC has tried to meet a lot of needs," said Wong, a long-time supporter. "Chinatown CDC really cares about these folks, everything that they do is geared to try and empower them and make their lives better."

Financial support — even small donations — sustains Chinatown CDC and allows them to fulfill their mission.

To that end, Wong and Barlow contribute a regular monthly amount and volunteer their time with Chinatown CDC and its partner organizations.

"There were a lot of individuals doing good, but then Chinatown CDC became the umbrella organization for Chinatown especially in terms of housing," said Barlow, who volunteers weekly at the his church's food pantry, a program the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown hosts in conjunction with Chinatown CDC. "They're able to help us work together better to serve the community."

In addition to time and money, Wong points out there are many ways to help: Donating children's items to Chinatown CDC's holiday gift and back-to-school drives, shopping at Community Thrift Store or volunteering at annual events like the Chinese New Year's parade, for example. Chinatown CDC may also have a place for volunteers who have specific skill sets, like general contractors or medical professionals.

"Come and do projects, see how you can help out," said Wong. "Or, become a table sponsor at Chinatown's annual dinner and make a regular monthly contribution."

**"Chinatown
CDC really cares
about these folks."**

SUSIE WONG
Chinatown Community
Development Center
supporter

EVERY BIT HELPS

When many people come together, they can accomplish great things. Contribute to Chinatown CDC and help uplift the community and its residents. **Here's how:**

- 1** Make a one-time or recurring donation of any amount
- 2** Increase the value of your gift by checking to see if your workplace matches employee charitable contributions
- 3** Select Chinatown CDC as your AmazonSmile charity of choice and 0.5% of eligible purchases will go to Chinatown CDC
- 4** Make a memorial or gift tribute in recognition of a loved one

Contributions should be made payable to: Chinatown Community Development Center (1525 Grant Ave., San Francisco, CA 94133). All donations are tax deductible.

Visit www.chinatowncdc.org/ways-to-give or call 415-984-1472.

Cathy Cha donates to Chinatown CDC so she can continue to enjoy the Chinatown she fell in love with.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.



Supporting a Great Cause

Longtime donors recognize Chinatown CDC's role in protecting and preserving a city they love

by Thea Marie Rood

Cathy Cha is well aware that San Franciscans don't have to trace their family roots to Chinatown in order to appreciate the impact Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) has on their city — and to help the nonprofit carry on its important work.

"My husband and I give to Chinatown CDC every year. I'm not Chinese and I'm not from Chinatown, but I love San Francisco," said Cha, who is president of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. "That's why we keep giving, and that's why I care. I want the city to still be a place I recognize in 10 years."

In fact, Cha believes that without the 40-year stewardship of Chinatown CDC, Chinatown as we have come to know it would have ceased to exist — entirely changing the character of San Francisco.

"In so many cities, Chinatown is completely gone or a shadow of its former self," she said. "In Washington, D.C., there is a big-box store around the gate — that's it. That could have been San Francisco. It's such prime real estate, it would have been plowed over. It would be condos, a retail store and malls."

Instead, San Francisco's Chinatown continues to attract visitors to its walkable streets and alleyways, its unique shops and restaurants, its rich and vibrant historical legacy.

"It's on everyone's list — tourists from England, Arizona, Virginia, they all want to go to Chinatown," Cha said. "It's right up there with the Golden Gate. It's one of our welcome mats to the world."

But Chinatown CDC also has a deeper mission that surrounds its residents, a mission that Cha also supports.

"There is a set of nonprofits that work in affordable housing," she said. "Chinatown CDC is one of the strongest, with a long reputation in San Francisco and very visible leaders. That really drew me to them."

Cha said rising rents and commercial development have adversely affected many other neighborhoods in the city — and, potentially, the people who are included in its culture.

"Chinatown has traditionally been low-income, new-immigrant, long-term senior populations and families crammed into a tiny room — trying to live the American Dream, with no voice in what parks they take their kids to or what parks they play mahjong in," she said. "Every person or company has a role in making the city great. And as donors, we are the ones who provide the financial resources to populations who would otherwise be shut out of the conversation."

**"I'm not from
Chinatown, but I love
San Francisco."**

CATHY CHA
President, Evelyn and
Walter Haas Jr. Fund

INVESTING A LOT

As a financially blessed member of the San Francisco community, you can do a lot to give back. **Here's how to help Chinatown CDC:**

- 1** Name Chinatown CDC as a beneficiary in your will or trust
- 2** Make a large financial contribution
- 3** Donate gifts of stocks or real estate
- 4** Call Chinatown CDC to donate your vehicle (working or not)

Contributions should be made payable to: Chinatown Community Development Center (1525 Grant Ave., San Francisco, CA 94133). All donations are tax deductible.

Visit www.chinatowncdc.org/ways-to-give or call 415-984-1472.

Celebrate Chinatown

Chinatown Community Development Center (Chinatown CDC) is working hard to preserve the city's history and empower San Francisco's residents. Among its many efforts, the nonprofit places tenants in safe and affordable housing and empowers youth with valuable life skills. Supporting Chinatown CDC with gifts of time, money, skills or items ensures it can continue its important work assisting the community. Learn more about Chinatown CDC and contact the nonprofit today to see how you can help!

WHAT SAN FRANCISCO LEADERS ARE SAYING



"Chinatown CDC has been fighting to preserve and create much-needed affordable housing for San Franciscans for decades. Their work not only provides homes, but also builds strong communities and enhances residents' quality of life through their core principles of respect, compassion, empowerment, and teamwork. I look forward to continuing our work together for years to come!"

LONDON BREED
Mayor of San Francisco



"I have had a long relationship with CDC whose organizing and community building has helped preserve the essence of the Chinatown neighborhood cultural and business characters. It has become a model in San Francisco's many other ethnic neighborhoods in their attempt to preserve their cultural characters. CDC is a beacon of stable force advocating for the needs of low-income residents."

NORMAN YEE,
President, San Francisco Board of Supervisors



"For decades Chinatown CDC has been leading a movement to empower communities to create and build safe, affordable and vibrant neighborhoods. I cannot imagine San Francisco without the good work of Chinatown CDC."

CARMEN CHU,
San Francisco Assessor-Recorder



Chinatown Community
Development Center
華協中心

CONTACT

Go to www.chinatowncdc.org for more information about what Chinatown CDC is doing for its residents.

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