

December 2012



CAN YOU HEAR US?

Wendy Ye



Ending this summer with a blast, the Teen Resource Center hosted its quarterly Open Mic event in the heart of Union Square. The theme—as Ne-Yo sang in his song A Little Space—was healthy relationships! As outstanding singers, poets, rappers, and dancers revealed their extraordinary

talents, the audience gained tips on how to circumvent clingy partners.

Overall, the event was a complete success! The audience enjoyed a wide variety of music ranging from country to hip hop by astonishing performers including Ken Ruan, Jennifer Tam, Justin Kim, and other unforgettable musicians. On a splendid summer day, sitting on the steps of Union Square, listening to wonderful tunes produced by wonderful artists, wouldn't you say this was the perfect way to end the summer?

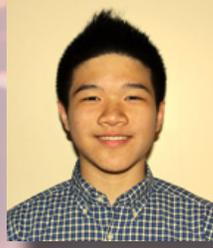


CHARLES B. WANG
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
王嘉廉社區醫療中心

What is CSLP?

The Community Service Learning Program (CSLP) is a paid six month internship training program that provides high school age teens with skills to serve the Asian American community through personal and professional development. CSLP is funded by the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.

THEIR OPEN MIC EXPERIENCES



Brian Wei

After presenting and viewing the vibrant performances at Columbus Park, hosting the Open Mic event was a remarkable and enjoyable experience. In the bustling center of the city, Union Square served as an open stage. With the event held here, it attracted the diverse population of the city. However, I had to become more vigilant in order to prevent disturbances during the performances. Despite this minor problem, I was glad to see returning performers cover popular songs and playing original pieces. Also, it was great to see new faces as they rap and incorporate new instruments such as the keyboard and a looping machine. As co-emcee, I was able to perform an opening skit with my fellow emcee, Joe. With a little comedy, the audience was introduced to the theme of the event and became interested in what we had to say. I was pleased to see that the audience here was receptive and energetic, and that the performers and the crowd had enjoyed their time in this organized event. From my experience, I learned that by appreciating each other, we could promote and strengthen a sense of well-being.



Alvin Wei

The rhythmic beats, the enthusiastic cheers from the crowds, and the spirited performances of singers and dancers manifested the energetic and fervent ambience of the Teenage Resource Center's Open Mic event at Union Square.

The event was held during a warm, summer day, perfect for outdoors and escaping the hectic city life.

The crowd consisted of the friends of performers, high school and college students, and even pedestrians who took their time to stop and watch the various performances. Being part of the audience, I not only enjoyed the catchy covers of songs by artists such as Rihanna and Jason Mraz, the tranquility of listening to original poems, and the intensity of the dancers during the intermission, but also appreciated that there is such a vast talent among the teens of New York City. I was awed by singers who wrote and performed original songs and a rapper who wrote his own verses, showing that teenagers do have artistic aspirations.

In spite of all the schoolwork and extracurricular activities we teenagers have to do, I discovered that the Open Mic event served as great way to relieve stress and provide others the chance to showcase their passions. The loud and supportive audiences created a positive atmosphere. The event set up a spotlight for the performers to display their talents not shown on a regular basis. Besides serving as an outlet of expression, the Open Mic event ultimately connected people together. The crowd was made up of people from different backgrounds, schools, and occupations—yet these people share a common quality: they all value free expression and support to their peers. Whether shown by cheers, high-fives, or simply applause, performers and members of the audience treasure free expression, for it allows the relieving of stress, making of friends, and a source a fun.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

Aaron Zheng



Through the Community Service Learning Program (CSLP), I was fortunate enough to intern at APEX this past year. APEX is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering underserved youth (particularly Asian American students) in New York City through a combination of one-to-one mentoring relationships and educational programs. Although I did not work as an actual mentor, I was able to experience working in a professional setting during my six months there. I spent most of my time doing office work, such as archiving student and mentor folders and transcribing interviews. I also created a directory of middle schools in New York City with a high demographic of Asian

American students to help APEX reach out to new schools.

Balancing my APEX schedule along with school was one of the difficulties during my internship. Since CSLP requires 150 hours at each internship site, I had to work my schedule to make sure I could reach those hours. Regardless of the challenges I had at APEX, I am truly privileged to have been able to be part of such a fantastic organization. With an incredibly friendly and supportive staff, I felt very comfortable working there. I can proudly say I both helped serve my community and gained valuable career skills and experience.

THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH: MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ASIAN TEEN PARTY CULTURE

Too often, Asian teens are overlooked when communities are addressing youth and risky behaviors they may engage in. As a result, programs aimed at addressing youth risk behaviors are lacking. So--the Community Service Learning Program set out to bust the "model minority myth." The interns looked to their peers and did some research on what is actually happening with Asian American teens.

Here is what they found:

On **YAHOO! ANSWERS**

"Should I invite these asians to my party?"

The user included the following reasons for not inviting "these asians"

1. I'm not comfortable with them because I think they won't enjoy my party....since I think they're not use to the culture of parties and the majority of people are white.
2. I'm not really friends with them, but we talk sometimes.
3. [They are] Awkward sometimes.

In response, we asked:

- What are the realities of Asian American teen party culture?
- How much is teen party culture labeled by the media and how can it be more accurately portrayed?
- What does the Model Minority Myth (CSLP 2011 project topic) have to do with Asian American teen party culture (CSLP 2012 project topic) ?

The questions brought up by this post led us to connect the following three myths:

1. Myth of Teen Party Culture ("Everyone's Doing It") As Represented in Media

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2. Model Minority Myth As Applied to Asian American Teens

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3. Birth of a New Myth That Asian American Teens Do Not Party Because of the Model

WHAT WE FOUND...

How Often Do You Party?

- Never Party*: 34.6%
- Party Every Few Months: 48.4%
- Party Once A Month: 13.1%
- Party Once A Week: 2.6%
- Party More Than Once A Week: 1.9%

[*However, most people answered later questions on the survey as though they do party.]

Do you party?

59% No
41% Yes



Research Methods

Online and paper survey (316)
Interviews (16)
Focus group (10)

Research Findings

Total Surveyed: 316
• Male: 135
• Female: 180
• Other: 1

Grade Level (2012-2013)

• College Freshman: 20.9%
• High School Seniors: 37.3%
• High School Juniors: 25.6%
• High School Sophomores: 11.1%
• High School Freshman: 4.7%

Through independent research and through other resources, we then busted the myths:

1. According to research from AlcoholEdu, less teens are entering college with this type of wild partying experience
2. Like teens of other ethnic groups, Asian American teens also face peer pressure and insecurities of fitting in
3. Asian American teens are not so different from other teens and are just as likely to party

WHAT WE RECOMMEND...

- Increase funding and continue support for youth development programs (e.g. CSLP) that break myths and stereotypes
- Continue development of institutions that provide health education services to teenagers, such as the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, which allow teens to make responsible decisions about their mental and physical health
- Continue funding and development of Asian media interest groups, such as Asian CineVision and the Asian American Arts Alliance, to help promote a more diverse image of Asian Americans in the media

Meet the Interns

- Alice Li • Alexander J. Valera • Aaron Zheng • Christine Quach • Kevin Trieu
• Lauren Michelle Huang • Lisa Kwong • Victoria Hom

For the full CSLP report, please visit: <http://bit.ly/RIcigP>

The mission of the Teen Resource Center (TRC) is to provide information and support to the Asian American adolescent population through health education, youth programs, & activities. TRC is a project of the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, which provides primary care and support services to everyone regardless of their ability to pay.

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TEEN RESOURCE CENTER

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