



Friends of Children with Special Needs

華人特殊兒童之友

FCSN Dream Builders

December 2017



Spreading the word on FCSN's new outreach project—monthly Coffee Social

最強女聲慈善音樂會 - 贏得最強掌聲

Fun memories of summer classes and events

After-school programs keep our clients active

Explore the Bay Area with FCSN's Family Day Trips



FCSN Co-Ed Dance Group performing a fitness dance at FCSN's 16th Annual Gala



Friends of Children with Special Needs
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Date: First Fridays of Every Month

日期: 每月第一個星期五

1/12, 2/2, 3/2, 4/6, 5/4, 6/1

Time 時間: 11:30am -1:00pm

Location 地點: FCSN South Bay Center, FCSN 南灣中心, 1029 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose

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FCSN Outreach Project is in Partnership with San Andreas Regional Center
FCSN兒童成長推廣計劃與San Andreas Regional Center 合作





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FCSN's 16th Annual Gala: Fulfill Our Dreams

By **Johnna Laird** | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter and Parent

FCSN's 16th annual gala, "Fulfill Our Dreams," lived up to its theme as more than 850 families and friends attended the October 28, 2017, at the Santa Clara Convention Center, an event that raised more than \$320,000 to support programs for children and adults with special needs.

Co-President Yee-Yeen Wang at the podium cited the completion of FCSN's South Bay Center that opened in San Jose in March 2017 as one of the year's highlights. President Wang reminded attendees that the center was the focus of the 15th annual gala's fundraising, and he thanked the crowd: "Without your generous support, we would not have made it."

Employment for special needs' individuals was unveiled as the focus for the 16th gala: "Employment always has been a priority for FCSN parents, but it has not quite achieved the level parents need and want," Co-President Wang said.

Pictures appeared on giant screens as Co-President Jim Chiao announced that FCSN will open Friends, Coffee and Tea Café in spring 2018 in the South Bay Center

with a slogan of "Coffee and friends are the perfect blend." The café is designed as a training program for FCSN clients to learn skills needed for employment in the restaurant industry.

Chairman of FCSN's Board of Directors Chenming Hu encouraged gala attendees to make the evening one of joy and happiness, taking time to meet others and rededicate themselves to FCSN's mission of helping people with special needs.

Making his third appearance as host for the evening, Emcee and award-winning broadcast journalist Matt Keller joked with the crowd that he is stopped more often and recognized as emcee for FCSN's Special Needs Talent Showcase that happens each spring than for his full-time work as a television reporter and part-time anchor at the ABC Affiliate Channel 7, KGO.

During the fundraising, FCSN's Board of Directors pooled monies to donate \$100,000 in matching funds that gala attendees met and exceeded. While donations came in amounts of tens of thousands of dollars, smaller contributions via cell phones drove the thermometer on stage rising

above \$300,000.

The Rev. Sang Han gave the keynote parent address, bringing his wife, He Soon Han, and his son, Aaron, on stage as he recounted Aaron's happy childhood that transitioned into adulthood where he enjoyed popularity among friends. On stage, Aaron smiled broadly as if on cue.

Born with Down syndrome, Aaron attended a day program post-high school, but Aaron began to lose his smile. He stopped watching his favorite programs. One day when the Rev. Han drove Aaron to his day program and dropped him off, the Rev. Han discovered that his son refused to go in. Back home, the Hans found that Aaron had suffered a number of bruises on his body. Immediately, they stopped sending Aaron to school. The months that followed were harrowing for the Hans, as they watched Aaron bang his head against the wall and tantrum outside. When the Regional Center of the Eastbay then recommended FCSN, the Hans visited FCSN and found an impressive program of which Kevin now belongs. The Rev. Han expressed appreciation: "When I hear Aaron singing or playing music in his room like he did before, when

the smile shines on his face, and when he enjoys the food we prepare, I rejoice. I just can't say enough thanks to all FCSN staff for being kind to Aaron, helping him to get out of his shell, and bringing my happy Aaron back."

The highlight of the evening brought FCSN performers from Fremont and the South Bay on stage: South Bay Percussion Ensemble; FCSN Chinese Music Ensemble; Dream Seekers; FCSN Co-Ed Dance Group; East Bay Adult Day Program Dancers; South Bay Ukelele Club; FCSN Dream Camp Dance

Performers; and Music Camp Band.

Among the dignitaries in the gala audience who have befriended FCSN and lent support over the years, were: San Andreas Regional Center Director Javier Zaldivar; Regional Center of the East Bay Director Lisa Kleinbub; Regional Center of the East Bay Board Chairperson and FCSN parent Kathy Hebert; Assembly members Kansen Chu and Ash Kalra; Fremont City Mayor Lily Mei and Fremont City Council members Raj Sawan, Greg Jones, and David Bonacorsi; Campbell Vice Mayor Paul Resnikoff; and Palo Alto City Council

member Greg Tanaka.

To wrap up the evening, the FCSN Music Camp Band invited attendees to move onto the dance floor.

"We had many more guests staying until the end of the dance party," says Anna Wang, who coordinates the band. "When the band finished playing the last song, 'Hawaii Five O,' people kept asking for more. No one on the dance floor left. Finally, we had to announce, 'Thank you for coming.' It was a great feeling to see all those people, including our clients, enjoying themselves."



South Bay Ukelele Club



East Bay Adult Day Program Dancers



Dance Party after Gala

FCSN's Gala: An Enjoyable Evening

By Mallory Ensminger | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter

I am new to FCSN, and I had never been to a gala before so I did not know what to expect.

What a showcase of talent! Seeing FCSN students perform was truly memorable. As I watched performers on stage, I couldn't help but think of FCSN's dedicated teachers and the skills they teach that change lives and lead to entertaining performances.

I was also pleasantly surprised by how many people attend FCSN's Gala. I am new to FCSN, and I did not realize how many individuals work diligently in so many different areas to maintain a successful organization and create such a pleasant evening. Everyone I interacted with was friendly.

Since this was my first gala, I had no idea that fundraising was part of the evening. The fundraising blew me away. Everyone who donated was so generous. This made me think that everyone who attended in some way is committed to FCSN's continued success and success of its clients.

What a great way to spend an evening, being entertained and in the company of such friendly, giving people.

經典民歌原音再現

胡立民 Limin Hu

最強女聲慈善音樂會 總召集人

灣曲第一次出現民歌演唱會，是2003年在 Santa Clara Convention Center 為華人特殊兒童籌募活動而辦的。當時 local 民歌手楊弦、陳明韶、王新蓮、林佳蓉、高敏惠，以及移民加拿大的鄭怡，還有夏威夷的許淑絹都前來助陣。因為從來沒有，也因為民歌在四、五年級的留學生心中一直佔有一個位子，兩場演唱會一票難求的盛況頓時成為僑界話題。之後連續兩年，施孝榮、潘越雲、黃大城、鄭怡、王海玲、金智娟和葉佳修，也紛紛前來支持『特別的愛給特別的你』以及『好好愛我』兩場慈善演唱會。每當想起他們熟悉的歌聲、激勵的辭句，總是不自覺眼眶泛紅、心情激動，因為那不僅是愛，還有思念、還有回憶。

睽違十二年，這群走過民歌隧道的義工再次在灣區唱響『民歌 42』，不僅是為籌備資金繼續服務不斷增加的特殊兒童，更因為我們真心希望民歌能在此生根，讓正常的孩子們與父母親一同領會真正校園民歌的精神以及文化傳承的意義。我要特別感謝齊豫、王海玲及鄭怡排除萬難，並與本地校園民歌手王新蓮及林佳蓉組成『最強女聲』一同演出支持我們的孩子；更感謝楊弦、張智真以及李宗琨擔任特別嘉賓為她們加油打氣。同時，我也很高興美西玉山科技協會以及矽谷美華科技商會能夠聯手全力促成這場演唱會。

作為一個父親，我要給十二位年輕孩子最大的掌聲。連續幾個月用 ABC 拼音賣力學唱這些文字艱深的美麗辭藻，不只為襯托歌手更為讓台下的父母親驕傲。我也特別激賞台上十三位結合不同族群的中生代樂團，以及來自社團菁英組成的人聲伴奏團體 A Cappella。音樂總監陳任遠不僅讓經典民歌原音再現，別具創意的編曲更使音樂充滿了新生命。今晚，我的工作就是好好享受、盡情回味，並為這場結合老中青三代的『最強女聲慈善音樂會』大聲喝彩！



最強女聲音樂會後記

李宗琨 CK Lee

這次有幸參加了最強女聲音樂會，感到十分榮幸，我們不僅一起回顧了陪我們長大的民歌，也感受到灣區華人的善心，我想分享一下演出者們的點點滴滴。

音樂總監陳任遠及其夫人池曼在編曲上花了大量的心力，在與他們和佳蓉練習時，可以感受到他們對音樂的執著，不管是速度的快慢，聲音的表現，還是咬字的正確與否，都非常仔細，讓我這個業餘的歌者學到許多。

灣區的音樂家及制作團隊，平常都有忙碌的生活，為了這次音樂會，大家都努力排出時間一起練習，甚至一人兼兩個工作，低音吉他手 Kai 由於很懂攝影，

也參與許多前置工作，長笛憶蓮老師客串 keyboard，和聲 Shirley 也幫忙打 bongo，大家互相配合，玩的不亦樂乎。團隊的愛心更是處處可見，為了節省經費，主辦人胡立民和制作人阮人美把家裏開放給遠到的歌手及樂手住，表演當天下午我們 FCSN 的志工還在大廳準備，就看到憶蓮老師率先捐款。能參予這麼快樂又有意義的活動，真是感恩。

讓我也分享一些歌手的花絮，楊弦大哥十分會養生，開演前的下午還回到車上小憩。由於年紀的關係，記歌詞是我們的一大挑戰，直到演出前，張智真大哥和我還自言自語的背誦歌詞。鄭怡是大姐頭的個性，聽到我不肯化妝，大聲要

求我上妝。海玲還是像三十多年前小妹妹的模樣，講話很好玩。最後我一定要說一下齊姐，她是我看過最平易近人的大明星，任何人要求與她合照，即使她沒化妝，練習時穿著也很隨意，她依然滿足大家合照的願望，每次和樂團練習完一首歌，她都會謝謝音樂老師，並常讚美音樂老師們，我有機會和這些可愛的歌手們同台，十分幸福。

這場音樂會讓我感受到灣區華人對民歌的熱情，好多人都說希望下一次不會再等十多年。感謝立民發願舉辦民歌演唱會，他再一次替華人特殊兒童之友做了最好的宣傳。

社區義工熱烈響應 最強女聲慈善音樂會

倪小蓁 Jen Tsao

今年年中，聽到多位有名的民歌手，將熱心的為特殊兒童慈善演出，FCSN 的義工組，也因而積極的招募了六十多位義工共襄盛舉。承擔音樂會前後對演出者和觀眾們的服務。

FCSN 的義工團隊包括了 FCSN 的家長、會員、高中生和華人社區熱心的朋友們。

在音樂會的頭一天，義工們便到達表演會場勘察環境，計劃取票和驗票的程序，以及觀眾入場的動線。同時，也忙著整理會場所有的座位，安排不同票價的座位區，確定座位總數符合售票的總數。除此之外，義工們也幫忙準備彩排工作人員的餐飲，並在藝人休息區，對演出者提供親切的個人服務。

在音樂會的當天，從下午一點半起，義工們便陸陸續續地報到。各小組即刻忙著分工合作，準備取票、驗票、樓上樓下的帶位和維持秩序等工作。同時也把 FCSN 在會場的展示桌及齊豫 CD 義賣的海報一一就位。義工們也協助準備工作人員的餐飲，以及提供演出者在休息區內的服務。

下午四點半左右，會場外陸陸續續開始有觀眾排隊。現場取票、售票，也井然有序地展開。將近五點半，興奮的觀眾們蜂擁而入。義工們驗票的驗票，取票的取票，帶位的帶位，忙得不亦樂乎。幾乎所有灣區的熟面孔都到了。混亂中，夾雜著老朋友們相見的歡愉。只見取票的義工，仔仔細細地核對身分，發票。驗票的義工，不斷地提醒座位區，分發節目單。帶位的義工，不斷地引導觀眾入席，也特別協助行動不便的長者們入座方便的位置。很驚訝的，有不少坐輪椅或拄拐杖的長輩前來參與這場盛會。

在節目順利開演一個多鐘頭後，取票的義工，還在仔細的核算金額。帶位的義工也還留守在場外，引導晚到的觀眾入席。場內帶位的義工，在開場後，也小心翼翼地站在一旁，並細心體貼的用手電筒照亮進出口，協助進出的觀眾，很晚才到三樓入座。

有一位坐在三樓的朋友，後來告訴我，她從樓上往下看，看到樓下觀眾入席井井有然。稱讚我們的義工發揮了很大的效用。

忙碌了大半天，音樂會散場時，見到每一位觀眾帶著感動和歡愉的笑容平安的離開，是義工們最大的安慰。能夠有機會參與這一場盛會，也是義工們一次很難得的經驗。





After-School Program Keeps FCSN Clients *Active*

By **Mallory Ensminger & Johnna Laird**
FCSN Dream Builders Reporters

On any weekday mid-afternoon when many children find themselves sitting in front of television, students in FCSN's afterschool program are actively engaged in learning, exercising, and building friendships.

Each afternoon, FCSN's After-school Program emphasizes a different skill, giving participants who can range in age from 5 to 22 an opportunity to explore cooking, arts and crafts, life skills, music, and dance, among other focus areas.

Miss Xiao Yan, head teacher and program coordinator, believes in keeping the program lively. On a particular Thursday in December, participants enjoy a warm afternoon exercising outdoors, then inside where they expect to work on friendship skills. But no! Miss Yan surprises them with a fire drill, an essential skill to understand how to respond calmly in an emergency.

Back inside New Hope Community Church's vestibule-home in Fremont to FCSN's East Bay After-school Program—each of the 13 students present that day retrieve a folding chair, set it up and create a semi-circle where they first stand to play Simon Says, amid laughter and friendly competition. Then Miss Yan leads a discussion about the importance of listening at school and at home. A fun, animated video of a rabbit character that fails to listen brings focused attention with eyes on the screen. After a discussion where children and young adults point out where the character made mistakes, Miss Yan engages students in role plays. Students break out in laughter as they watch volunteers exaggerate behaviors to demonstrate how not to respond in social situations and then

show well-received social responses. Students raise their hands to list positive ways to interact with others and ways to show they are listening.

The lesson ends with participants proudly pasting behavior stars on a board, stars to earn credit for a shopping spree before the new year.

In the blink of an eye, Miss Yan is introducing a guest speaker, a teen volunteer with containers of Legos impressing them with a Lego vehicle, powered by a rubber band that flies across and nearly off the table. Soon everyone is gathered around the table, hands-on, digging into the containers and assembling Legos.

FCSN's program is somewhat unique, serving a wide age group that creates community and where individuals encourage and support each other. Program coordinator Yan works with a team of 10 adults, including Kelly Ko, who oversees the program and whose son attended the program for five years.

Operating from 3 to 6 p.m., the program offers a one-to-three ratio, with one adult for every three students. Youth volunteers assist with activities which often make the program seem like one-on-one.

According to Kelly, there are several reasons parents choose FCSN's East Bay After-school Program. First, it provides structure. Instead of going home and experiencing boredom, children at FCSN's After-school Program work on various skills that engage them. Parents can rely on FCSN to provide a safe environment where children are well-cared for during program hours. FCSN offers an educational environment that caters to the needs of each individual child. Most importantly, the adults who operate the program really enjoy children, helping them grow and reach their potential.

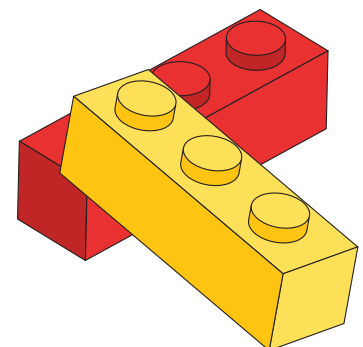
Parents of special needs children often experience difficulty in locating a place that meets both educational and social needs, says Kelly. FCSN's after-school program strives to keep students engaged and teach them life skills that can make the rest of their life a bit easier. As a result, new classes are added each year based on what most benefits students who are enrolled.

The week begins with a focus on cooking where students help prepare a meal that is shared with the group. Arts and crafts happen Tuesdays where students make decorations for holidays and special occasions to share with their families. The remainder of the week, students work on life skills, academic enrichment, exercise, and most importantly, fun.

FCSN is continuing to recruit program volunteers who have an interest in getting to know and want the rewarding experience of working with a special needs child.



Lego Activity



A Twist on Monsters Inc.

By **Mallory Ensminger** | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter

Every year for the past six years, the FCSN Drama Camp performs a Disney/ Pixar inspired play. The 2017 installment, *Monsters Inc. with a Twist*, performed on Sunday, July 9th. *Monsters Inc.* follows two monster friends, Mike and Sully, as they attempt to return Boo, a human child, to her home. The play was staged at the New Hope Community Church in Fremont with a cast of 25, ranging from children to young adults. Another standing-room only audience was totally delighted with the presentation as shown by their enthusiastic applause throughout the performance.

The Twist, coming from the dance numbers skillfully choreographed by Anna Wang, and performed on stage by the entire cast, totally engaged the audience. As the cast began stomping and moving rhythmically to each song, the audience responded by bouncing and dancing in their seats. The songs performed were “Tequila” (changed to Monsters Inc,) “Ghostbusters,” and “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough.” The ensemble illustrated that all cast members worked hard to put on a funny, engaging, and lighthearted performance. Video clips from the original movie were projected on large screens to further enhance the story, tying the actions of the cast together.



Kathy Hebert, an FCSN volunteer and a Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) board member, directed the play once again. The cast put the play together over three days, a total of only seven hours of rehearsals--two hours on Friday, four hours on Saturday, and one final hour on Sunday just prior to curtain time. Kathy's son, Greg, played the part of Mike, one of the Monsters, to rousing applause from the audience. Greg has also participated in all six Drama Camp performances and his experience was evidenced by his ability to deliver all his lines crisply and confidently.

Overall the audience had a great time, as did the cast. Here is to another successful performance and a bright future with Drama Camp 2018.



FCSN's Night Out at the Silent Movies

By **Mallory Ensminger** | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter

FCSN is always looking for fun and educational events to bring clients out into the community. One such event occurred in late September 2017 with a movie night at the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum and Theater in Fremont's historic Niles district.

The movie night featured two silent films: *Out West: The Making of Broncho Billy* starring cowboy, Billy Anderson, and *A Night Out with Charlie Chaplin*, featuring the comedian and his antics. Clients from FCSN's Supported Living Services, staff members, and parents attended the Friday night event, organized by Marie Cates, the mother of FCSN SLS client, Kelly. While the evening was arranged for FCSN participants, Marie noted that the museum

offers silent films to the public on Saturdays and Sundays. Beyond the films, the theater makes an exciting outing to see photographs and clothing displays that provide a look back at the Silent Film Era, when some of Hollywood's well-known movies were filmed in Niles and Niles Canyon.

First built in 1913, the Essanay Theater was destroyed by fire in 1923. Rebuilt in 1959, the theater became a museum dedicated to silent films in 2004.

Marie, an active FCSN volunteer, also organized the SLS summer picnic and continues to organize participation in Special Olympics.

FCSN Family Fun Festival

An Outreach Event
sponsored by the Regional Center

By **Kelly Ko** | East Bay Enrichment Program Manager

This year, in an effort to outreach to the Asian community, the Regional Center partnered with and sponsored FCSN to host the very first Family Fun Festival at the Always Dream Play Park located at Fremont's Central Park (Lake Elizabeth). The event took place on Sunday, August 27, 2017, from 11:00am to 3:00pm. FCSN was chosen because many of FCSN's members and families are Asian. Regional Center has a commitment to cultural and linguistic sensitivity to the needs and struggles of the Asian community, which is a target audience for the Regional Center. At FCSN, we were super excited to be chosen. Events like these give FCSN an opportunity to

educate Asian families about Regional Center and the services it provides.

As one of the outreach managers, I had the pleasure of planning this special event with the help of my wonderful staff. The month-long planning included creating and distributing flyers in English, Chinese and Vietnamese; we invited community partners to provide resource information; we purchased food, packaged giveaway bags, and thought of different game ideas. We also recruited volunteers. There were so many details we needed to plan. It was satisfying to see all aspects come together on the day of the event.



It was a fun-filled day with free food, carnival games, face-painting, a jump house, bubble station, arts and craft, raffle drawings, and even a manicure station. Although temperatures soared into the mid-90s, more than 400 people attended. Over 80% of attendees were Asians. We counted more than 150 families who supported our event. Each family who came and signed in received free FCSN drawstring bags filled with school supplies. Some community partners, including Disability Rights California Bay Area, Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs, Regional Center of the East Bay, San Andreas Regional Center, Developmental Disability Council, and Voter Registration among others, hosted a booth at the source fair to share information about their organizations.

A huge thank you to Auntie Anna Wang, Vice President of Enrichment Programs and Community Relations, for coordinating live entertainment enjoyed throughout the day. She invited finalists and winners from our 2017 Special Needs Talent Showcase to perform, and the performers put on an amazing show. Performances reflected the diverse cultures within our community. Attendees were able to see and enjoy the talents on stage. The Music Camp Band opened the show with "Fanfare," "Spy Medley," and "That's What Friends Are For." Other performances included Laurie Chu's scarf dance, Julian Huang's instrumental music performed on the piano, Rod Rodriguez and Lynn Pisco's hip-hop dances, Dream Seekers' singing and dancing, among others.

great cultural performance was given by Jasmine Dan, who performed an Indian dance, while Ria Sachdev, sang an Indian song. Chiling Wu played the piano and Chinese dulcimer. The performance concluded with The Music Camp Band's "We are the World."

Ten FCSN staff members and more than 30 volunteers from FCSN and Global Leadership Initiative contributed time to help us set up and clean up, run all the games and booths, and serve the food to guests. I want to especially thank a few of these people for their extra hard work. Thank you to Uncle James Gong for cooking a scrumptious lunch consisting of different types of burgers and hot dogs under the scorching sun, Auntie Anna and Ping Ding for transporting everything from the Fremont Center to the play park, and the After-school Program staff for overseeing and working the FCSN booths as well as the arts and craft, face painting, and manicure stations. Thank you to Jennifer Li, one of our Board of Directors, and to Sherry Meng, our Director of South Bay Enrichment Programs, for help at the FCSN booth. This event could not have been so successful without this group of wonderful people.

We hope FCSN will continue to have similar events in the future. These events help bring Asian families with special needs loved ones closer together as well as educate them on the services that Regional Centers can provide. We want to empower families to advocate for their own children so their children can have access to services that will help them live a fulfilling life within their community.



Feature on

Alice Jen

Pianist Extraordinaire

By **Vivian Chiang** | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter

As the familiar tune of a Rachmaninoff piece came on the radio, Alice Jen sat quietly in her mom's van, seemingly absorbed in the word game on her iPad. It was a day just like any other, as Alice and her mom were coming home.

But as soon as they arrived, Alice sat down at the piano bench and stared at the 88 keys in front of her. Her right hand hovered over several keys before her fingers began to touch the keys. Lone notes echoed through the quiet house, as her parents and sister were in the kitchen and scattered in separate rooms, not paying full attention to Alice. Quickly, though, single notes became a phrase, and then the melody of that Rachmaninoff piece rang throughout the house. Alice's left hand slowly joined her right with accompaniment.

To us, Alice's Rachmaninoff story may seem like a shock—the ability to hear and then play—but it was not a surprise to her parents. When Alice was two years old, her parents learned that she had autism. Not giving up, they searched endlessly for activities and events that would grab Alice's attention. However, Alice wasn't interested in dolls, toys, or other kids. Instead, her mother observed one day that Alice sat glued to the TV screen displaying an ad for a keyboard.

"She was there for an hour or two," Alice's mother, Jia, said. "We thought she might like it, so we bought a keyboard first, and later a real piano. She was a little more than four years old."

That proved to be the right choice as it was the beginning of Alice's musical career. A friend of Alice's mother offered an old Suzuki piano book with a CD in the back. Alice's

mom played the CD every day when Alice ate, played, and slept. Nothing happened for a couple of months, but the same songs of the first Suzuki book could be heard down the street from morning to dusk.

"Then, one day, she just sat in front of the piano and played the first to the fourth song," Jia said. "We were all shocked."





Alice had no training in reading music or any basic piano skills. By listening, she had mastered the first four songs in one try. The first four songs of the book had the same notes for both hands, just different octaves. Starting from the fifth song, the notes became more complicated. Alice took it as a challenge to conquer these songs. As soon as she finished eating every day, she would sit at the piano and try to play the fifth song. This repeated for many days and weeks until one day, Alice finally got through the whole fifth song – again with no musical score or lessons.

“We were all really excited,” Jia said. “Alice didn’t even speak at that time, but within a year, she could play through a couple of CDs.”

When Alice was six years old, she met her first piano teacher in San Jose. It was hard for her to get used to a teacher, and it took a long time for chemistry to develop with the teacher.

“Whenever the teacher tells her to change something, she would slide down the piano bench, go under the

piano, and run away,” Jia said.

After a while, Alice found herself able to play several more and different songs. She realized that her teacher was actually of some use; Alice started to enjoy going to piano lessons. After three years, at age nine, she attended FCSN Music Camp and met prominent pianist and teacher, Raincat, whose real name is Jinye Wang. Alice switched to study under her.

Under tutelage of Raincat, Alice won first place at the Western Regional California State Talent and Performing Arts Competition in 2008, 2010, 2012 and the U.S. Open Music Competition in 2014. She was one of the top three winners of the Special Needs Talent Showcase in 2016. Days before 2017 came to a close, Alice was notified that she won second place at Elite International Music Competition audition and will perform in 2018 at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

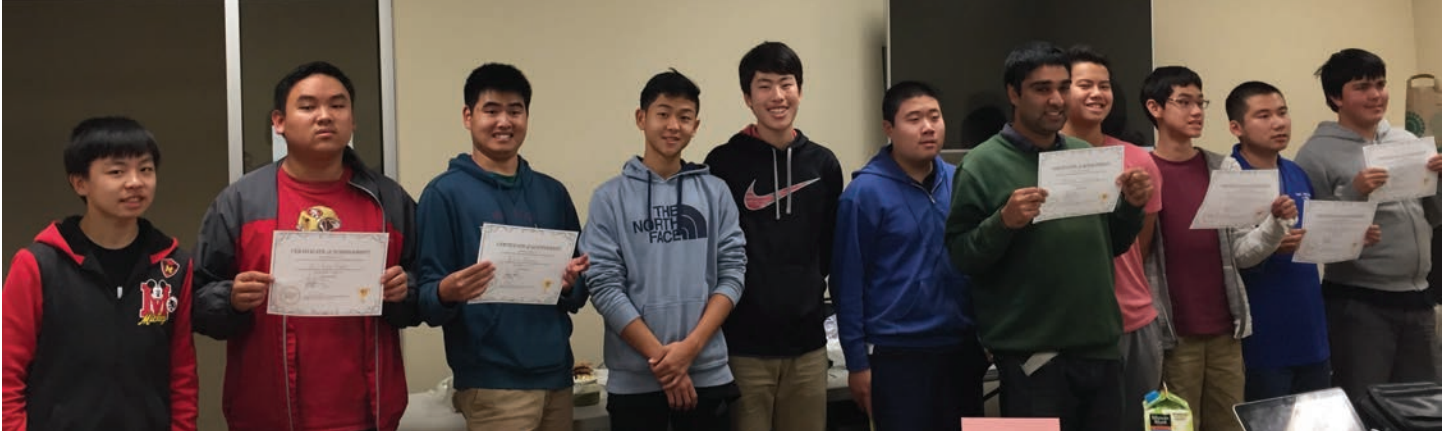
“FCSN has opened up a great opportunity for individuals like Alice with musical talents,” Jia said.

“Alice became one of the founding musicians of the renown FCSN Dream Achievers Band when she was merely 12 years old. The band has performed in Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, California State Capitol, universities, public and private parties. This past year alone, Alice with Dream Achievers performed more than once a week, giving 68 performances from Sacramento to San Diego.”

Alice’s road to musical success is not perfect and smooth, but one filled with obstacles which she has overcome one by one. There will be many wonderful surprises in the future for Alice that she will embrace with her signature smile and wide grin. Alice serves as an ambassador of hope to parents of special needs children and a messenger to never give up. Her parents’ persistence to look beyond behavioral issues and recognize that Alice has so much more to share with the world has enabled Alice’s light to shine. Music is her language, her self-expression.

My Experiences in FCSN

By Jason Yang | FCSN Youth Volunteer



I first heard about Friends of Children with Special Needs back in September 2015 when I just started high school. My piano teacher had organized a group of students to teach music class as a community service activity. I joined right away once I learned that the students at FCSN were eager to gain computer knowledge. In fact, I was the first member to join the group teaching computer skills since I was, and still am, an avid programmer and love all things related to computer science.

In the beginning, I volunteered with two friends, Kevin and Brandon. I started our lessons by teaching a Scratch class each week. This class was so popular and successful that we soon offered two classes each semester. We also gathered interest from other high schoolers to help teach. Currently, we now have six teachers that help teach every class. Gradually, our classes have become more nuanced. We have offered several levels in different topics to cater to each student's individual needs: Introductory and Intermediate Scratch, Introductory and Intermediate Java, and Introductory and Intermediate Web Design. Since no experience is necessary to join our

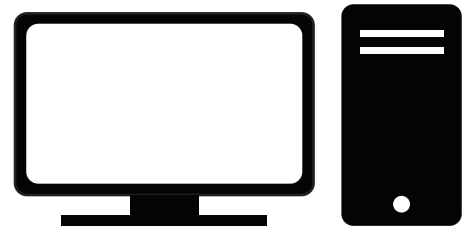
introductory classes and computer teachers have heard positively from past and current students, many students are eager to join computer classes. We try to make learning as much fun as possible by working closely with students, offering raffle prizes, throwing parties, and awarding certificates upon class completion.

Looking back, I am truly amazed by the success of our computer classes. More than half of the students enrolled now have been with us since the start, which means that many of them have been taking computer classes with us for two and a half years! Some have even attended all seven classes. As for our teachers, we have never missed a class in the past two years since we began teaching. Through rain or shine, we've always been there for our students.

Achieving success, however, has not been an easy road. The reason our program attracts so many students is that the teaching staff works very hard and takes a lot of time to plan the curriculum. Every week, the teachers and I have a meeting to prepare for our classes. We create PowerPoint slides, write homework questions and answers,

send class reminders, and plan for the year-end parties. I also have the responsibility to train and coach new volunteers, helping them to become effective teachers.

I immensely enjoy volunteering with FCSN and working with the students. I look forward to teaching my class every Saturday afternoon and enjoy connecting with students and helping them understand how to translate their thoughts into code. I want them to succeed in our classes and build skills that can benefit them in many other areas. Teaching at FCSN has made me more patient, more compassionate, and a better communicator. Although I have already donated much of my time and energy to the FCSN community, I believe that I have received so much more. It has truly helped me to become the person I am today.



A Great Saturday at School— Annual Chinese American Athletic Tournament

By Jasmine Hsia | FCSN Volunteer

The sun was hot and glaring as I made my way onto one of Cupertino High School's multiple fields. Booths had been set up all over the grass, and the entire area was buzzing with excitement. There was a stage, performers, dancers, and lots of food. This was my first time volunteering for FCSN at the annual Taiwanese Chinese American Athletic Tournament (TCAAT) on July 9.

In total, 10 people had signed up to volunteer for the day. After everyone had signed in and introduced themselves, we proceeded to the first event, a parade for all the associations at the event to represent themselves. Both volunteers and special needs participants walked a lap around the CHS track to represent FCSN alongside many other groups.



Afterward, the volunteers were called aside to help set up a variety of games, including Soccer, Golf, Frisbee, and Paddleball. Our purpose was to explain how the game was played and watch the players to determine if they completed it successfully. After the parade ended, paper was handed to game participants to mark down which games they played well, so they could earn a prize at the end. It was so much fun to see how excited everyone was to play. None of the players ever gave up and were always determined to try again until they were able to play successfully.

In addition to the spirited players, the volunteers at the event were also friendly and easy to talk to. I immediately felt at ease, and time flew by as I watched and helped players with the games. After a short lunch break, participants headed for water games. Each volunteer paired up with a special needs child and played a game of catch with water balloons. As the events came to an end, everyone was slightly wet but still laughing and having fun. Seeing so many people participating and having fun was an amazing experience that I will definitely look forward to in the future.



快樂的 FCSN 家庭旅遊

By Mannching Wang | FCSN Parent



FCSN 的家庭旅遊，是我和兒子最喜歡的活動之一。從有活動以來，我們幾乎每次都參加。在這裡要特別感謝 Roxana 每一次的精心策劃，在活動前他要尋找適合我們孩子出遊的路線；活動又兼顧到運動、教育，和娛樂的目的。為了讓每個家庭盡興的享受每次旅遊，Roxanna 一定是先做足功課，上網搜尋旅遊地點的景點、美食、特色，並提醒大家可以先預訂餐廳。

旅遊對一般人可能是一件很簡單的事情，但是對有特殊兒童的家庭，每次出遊，有很多要考慮的地方，例如在交通工具上的時間不能太長，方便孩子們上洗手間。健行的路程，對行動不方便的人要考慮到。也有些孩子，對於飲食有特別的需求。另外有些孩子在環境的轉變過程中，可能會有不適應的情況，而發出一些聲音，或者動作。更甚者，有些孩子因為沒有辦法表達自己，有時候會因為我們不知道的原因，而產生一些拒絕合作的行為。這些情況都會令父母對於帶孩子出遊有些卻步。

FCSN 的家庭旅遊，讓我們這些家裡都有特殊兒童的父母，可以在一種很安心，相互了解，互相接納的情況下，愉快出遊。這個活動已經進行幾年，我們常常參加的家庭，彼此已經很熟悉，孩子們也都互相認識，有時候某個家庭沒來參加的時候，孩子們也會詢問為什麼某某人沒來？這種在遊玩中建立的感情，以後在他們的社交生活上會扮演一個很重要的角色，也讓孩子彼此之間更加認識。在旅途中，父母彼此支持，彼此鼓勵，讓我們大家在旅途中沒有擔憂。

像我自己的孩子，因為他是腦性麻痺，大肌肉小肌肉的協調性並不是很好，平常很不喜歡運動，但是跟著大家出遊的時候，他就有很大的動力跟著大家一起走路，而且很享受跟他這些朋友在一起的時光，一起坐火車，一起坐船，一起坐觀光巴士，跟大家打招呼，享受美食，享受沿途的風景，看著他這麼開心，我也覺得很快樂！

這幾年，我們已經走遍灣區很多的城市，做深度的旅行。很多家庭也更有勇氣嘗試長途旅遊。謝謝 Roxana 安排了幾次郵輪的旅行，讓我們能帶著我們的孩子走向世界。我也很期待不久的將來我們可以有兩天一夜或者三天兩夜的旅行。



A Perfect Sunday! FCSN Family Day Trip

By **Wei-Jen Hsia** | FCSN Editor & Volunteer

On the first Sunday of November, I joined many FCSN families for the last bus trip of the year, exploring Lafayette and Walnut Creek. Our trip coordinator, Roxana, spent lots of time researching the Internet to design day trips for us. For most of us, today's destination marked a first-time visit as a tourist. We all looked forward to a day of adventure together.

After the chartered bus picked up families from the two usual stops in Cupertino and Fremont, our tummies were rewarded with a variety of delicious hot pastries. It's a tradition that first timers sing during the bus ride; Cherence, without any hesitation, started off with a solo performance and then a duet with Mannching. This kicked off the singing marathon from our kids. From Candy's "Over the Rainbow" to Eric's "Let It Go," their shyness transformed to confidence as soon as they were handed the microphone.

Good times pass by so fast; we arrived at the first destination, the Lafayette Reservoir Recreation Area. The nearly-full parking lot shows that this is a popular, hidden gem. The air was crisp on this autumn morning with bright sunshine and not a trace of unsettling weather that had lingered in the last few days. Everyone was busy taking photos in front of the beautiful reservoir. We hiked along the three-mile reservoir loop; we came across children on the playground, at the picnic tables, on the paddle boat launching dock, and many smiling faces greeted us. Soon everyone was looking forward to the next stop: lunch!

We were dropped off right next to the Walnut Creek Broadway Plaza. It's a very nice outdoor shopping mall that reminded me of Stanford shopping center. Our special love ones led the way in front of us, hand-in-hand, chatting and laughing, a scene I will not forget.

We headed toward Walnut Creek downtown where there were lots of great restaurants. I stayed with Roxana's group because she has great taste and high standards. We were very lucky that a 4.5-star restaurant, 54 Mint Forno Italiano was able to seat nine of us without a wait. We shared different salads, pizzas, and pastas; we did a great job cleaning all the plates. Despite very full tummies, we found room for sweets. Lottie's ice cream shop with so many interesting flavors made decision-making difficult. Afterward we strolled in a park, taking group pictures, and just simply relaxing in the warm afternoon sun while waiting for our chartered bus.

Last stop was the Lindsay Wildlife Museum where we had the opportunity to interact with live animals. There were many activities, such as animal feeding and craft making, meeting animals with their handlers, and, best of all, watching staff and volunteers at the wild life hospital treating an injured fox; our special loved ones had the chance to ask many questions during the operation session.

As we headed home with a beautiful sunset, I thought what a perfect Sunday: outdoor exercise and a close encounter with wildlife, delicious food, lots of laughs, and most of all, wonderful company with our FCSN families! I can't wait for the next adventure in spring.





“To Dream the Impossible Dream”

Mission Statement

FCSN’s mission is to help individuals with special needs and their families to find love, hope, respect, and support through integrated community involvement.



Aunty Linmei led the FCSN team with a dance routine at the 4th of July Parade in Fremont.



East Bay After-School Program—Halloween party



FCSN South Bay Vocal Class—Fall Recital



Friends of Children with Special Needs

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