



Friends of Children with Special Needs

華人特殊兒童之友

FCSN Dream Builders

January 2019



**A Trailblazer for Special Needs Kids-
An interview with Sally Wu**



Fashion Show and the
Music + Hope Benefit
Concert.



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story shared at the FCSN's
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Check out Dream Achievers Band's
first East Coast trip to Washington, D.C.



FCSN Dream Builders

January 2019



Friends of Children with Special Needs

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Table of Contents

FEATURED STORY

- | | | |
|---|------------|---|
| • A Trailblazer For Special Need Kids: Sally Wu | Helen Chou | 3 |
|---|------------|---|

PAST EVENTS

- | | | |
|---|--------------|----|
| • FCSN's Yearly Family Camping at Yin's Ranch | | 7 |
| • FCSN 2018 Gala: One Annual Night of Fun, Family, and Friendship | Wesley Hu | 8 |
| • Music and Hope Benefit Concert
FCSN Fashion Show | | 10 |
| • Dream Achievers Perform in the Nation's Capital | Johnna Laird | 11 |
| • First Bus Trip with FCSN Brings a Pleasant Surprise | Wesley Hu | 12 |

FCSN CLIENT SERVICES

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|----|
| • Let's Get Cooking! | Claudia Pina | 13 |
| • Build a Vibrant Community | Vivian Chung | 14 |
| • SEP & TDS: Roadmap to Employment | Claire Go | 15 |

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FEATURED STORY

A TRAILBLAZER FOR SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS: SALLY WU

By **Helen Chou** | FCSN parent and Dream Builders Reporter

Today's parents have options for extracurricular activities for their special needs children. FCSN provides sports classes such as swimming, golf, and badminton; there's even Chinese school, Zumba, and art classes readily available for kids of different abilities. These types of programs would not have been easily accessible, if not for the persistence and ingenuity of one parent of a special needs kid.

Thirteen years ago, Sally Wu was looking for swimming classes that would be a good fit for her 8-year-old son Michael, but none of the programs in the area accepted him. Insisting that swimming was an important life skill, Sally enrolled Michael in private lessons at ClubSport Fremont. After two years of taking private lessons from ClubSport Swimming Director Mark Carter, Michael learned to swim. Encouraged by the results, Sally talked to Mark about starting a swimming camp for special needs kids during the summer months, giving more kids the opportunity to learn this valuable life skill. During the summer of 2005, the FCSN swimming summer camp was created with less than 10 kids who received one-on-one swimming lessons with trained coaches. Every year since, the camp has grown in popularity; this past summer, the program served more than 70 special needs children.

Since establishing the swimming camp, Sally started several more programs to benefit countless children with special needs. In the interview below, Sally shares some of her experiences starting these programs.



Q: Can you please share what circumstances prompted you to create these programs?

A: The main purpose of these programs is to create opportunities for our special needs kids to explore different aspects of the world. I believe that by helping our kids explore their interests, they can obtain valuable life skills, and we can help them realize their maximum potential.

When Michael was little, I wanted him to try different activities, but I couldn't find programs that were willing to accept special needs kids. I still remember trying to



enroll my son at swimming camp when he was eight years old but not being able to find any programs that would accept him. I felt so frustrated and discouraged. Eventually, I talked to Mark at ClubSport about creating a swimming camp especially for special needs kids. He helped me start the camp and provided one-on-one coaches for our kids.

I established the Chinese School from a similar situation. When Michael was also eight years old, I tried really hard to enroll him in Chinese school, but no school would accept him. I then gave up teaching him Chinese and just focused on his English. But when he turned 13, I was surprised that Michael started listening to Chinese songs and began singing Jay Chou's songs every day! I started to regret my decision to not continue to pursue his Chinese education. However, I knew that the existing Chinese schools were not willing to accept him, and even if they did, he would have had to start from kindergarten. So, I thought I should start a school on my own for children with special needs. I started to look for Chinese teachers and students who were interested in learning Chinese.

In 2013, we started our Special Shine Chinese School with only four students. In the first two years, we spent a lot of money on Chinese textbooks shipped from Taiwan. I worried that the program would not attract enough students to continue, so I started

looking for funding. In 2015, I registered Special Shine Chinese School with the Ministry of Education in Taiwan and received free Chinese textbooks from Taipei Economic and Culture Representative Office (TECO). We also received funding from World Bright Special Shine (WBSS) Way Inc., which is instrumental in providing funds to help us expand our program to also include art and dance classes.



Q: Were there challenges that you encountered along the way?

A: It was very challenging to establish the program and the school at first. I did not have the resources, and my specialty was not in education. In the beginning, I spent a lot of time researching, organizing, and exploring different resources that might benefit our kids. After the first year, the programs started to gain traction and run more smoothly as other parents began to participate more.

One major challenge that we always have is that we are always short on experienced volunteers for the sports programs and for Chinese school. Another challenge I often deal with is parents' anxiety regarding their kids. While I understand this desire to protect our kids, we want to let the teachers and volunteers handle the students' activities and for students to learn to listen to the teachers and helpers, so we do not let parents sit in on classes in Chinese school. The only programs that include parent participation are Zumba and golf. We also face the challenge of needing more space to run these classes as our programs expand.

Sometimes, I feel tired because of my busy schedule, but just seeing the smile on the faces of the kids and seeing their potential for growth keeps me going. Right now, Emily Lin helps me as administrator of the Chinese School, which makes things easier for me. As the programs grow, I think that we need to start training the next generation of program coordinators to keep continue the program.



Q: What do you envision for these programs?

A: I feel very positive about these programs because



I can see our kids' growth in so many different ways. Some students improve on their drawing. Some students can sit at the table without behavioral I feel so happy when I see that they improve their skills and behaviors through these programs. I love to see kids explore their talents, and I feel most empowered when I see them smiling and enjoying the programs. I think that is the main motivation to keep me going.



Q: What advice do you have for parents who have kids whose needs are not being met by existing programs?

A: I would advise parents to try to create opportunities for their kids. We are the first line to provide our kids with the best opportunities and environments to help them with their disabilities. I believe that with caring, patience, and love, every parent can make it happen.

I look for programs that will benefit my own child first; if there are no programs that are suitable, then I create a program for it. When I started the Golf Program, I didn't know anyone who played golf. I went to the Fremont Golf Course near Mission and Stevenson and talked to the owner, Alex Jansen, and told him my concept of pairing special needs kids with their own parents to manage their behaviors. I needed a paid coach to give them instructions, and I also wanted to find funding to decrease the financial burden on the parents.

Also, after a child becomes interested in a particular activity, parents can help them succeed by moving them toward private lessons to obtain more advanced skills. One of the children in our programs, Austin, is very good at ceramics. Austin started off with my son, Michael, in a small one-on-two class with a private teacher in his ceramics studio. We could see that Austin truly enjoyed and excelled at ceramics, so his mom sought to expand his skill through more classes. Now, Austin's ceramic pieces are sold at South Bay's FCSN Friends Coffee & Tea. Our programs can provide opportunities and open the door to discover our kids' talents, but once that talent is discovered, parents should help them maximize their potential by seeking further opportunities.

Of course, we have many people in the community who support us and help make these programs possible, like Mark and the management team at ClubSport, and Alex Jansen, the owner of the Fremont Golf Course. Anna Wang and Sylvia Yeh of FCSN help us apply for and obtain grants to support our programs, and we are so lucky to have the support of WBSS Way Inc. to keep our programs and Chinese School running. Also, with parents' support, we can make the programs run longer and expand to other areas.



Q: What advice can you give to parents of special needs individuals?

A: Never give up. Keep trying to discover your kid's talents and interests. I still remember my son cried and screamed for almost two years when I enrolled him in swimming. His behavior was so challenging that none of the coaches could handle him. I struggled with the decision, but I did not give up, and I insisted that he needed to learn to swim. At that time, I did not see swimming as just a sport, but rather I treated it as a vital life skill. I talked to Mark, the swimming director at ClubSport, who decided to teach my son himself. After the initial struggle, it turned out that my son LOVED to swim. I will never forget his smiling face when he was swimming in the pool. He now knows all the different strokes and really enjoys it.

In some cases, it may be that the kids are not quite ready to explore a certain skill at that time. One child in Chinese School had a very hard time the first year and withdrew from the program after a couple of classes. However, by the next year, the parents decided to give it another try; this time the kid was ready. He was happy to join in on activities, and he really loved the classes. So, my advice to parents is "Never give up on your kids."



Programs started by Sally

FCSN Summer Swimming Camp: One-on-one swimming instructions to provide opportunities for special needs kids to learn the important life skills of swimming. Coordinated with Mark, Swimming Director of ClubSport Fremont, the program operates from June to August during summer break, Mondays through Thursdays with 45-minute sessions from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.



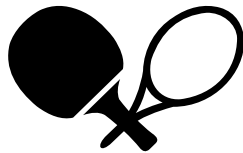
Basketball Camp (2010-2011): This program at ClubSport provides basketball instruction for a group of 12 special needs kids. This program was discontinued. It is possible for discontinued programs to be revived if there is interest expressed and volunteers are available to help with the coordination effort.

Golf Program: Instructional classes for special needs kids interested in learning golf. Parents are paired with their children to increase interaction between parent and child. Operated by Fremont Golf Club owner, Alex, classes include four to five children and take place on Sundays, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.



Special Shine Chinese School: Chinese school started in 2013 and designed specifically for special needs students. Students ranging from age 6 to 25+ are divided into three levels and learn Mandarin by singing songs and learning to read and write pinyin and traditional Chinese characters.

Table Tennis Program: (2017)
Coordination by ClubSport's Table Tennis Coach, the program provided one-to-four instruction and practice environment for special needs kids interested in learning table tennis. This program was discontinued due to shortage of participants.



Tennis Program (2010-2011): This program, coordinated by a ClubSport Tennis coach, provides one-to-four instruction and practice for special needs kids interested in learning tennis. Parents are paired with their kids for learning and practice. This program was discontinued due to shortage of participants.

Art class: Students learn through multimedia art projects, water painting, and drawing with pencils and crayons. Classes are held in the FCSN East Bay Center Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 noon.



Badminton Program: Instructional classes for special needs kids interested in learning badminton. Coordinated by ClubSport's Badminton Coach, classes include four participants on Sundays, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Choir class: This is a new class starting in Spring of 2019 for students over 12-year old.

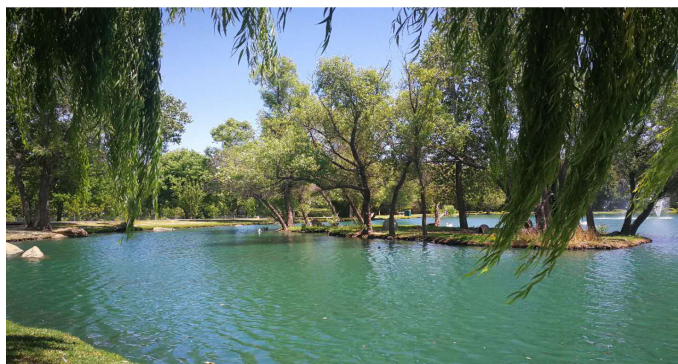
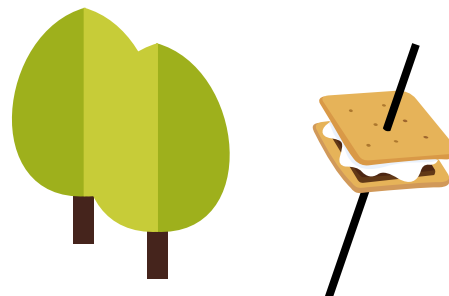


Zumba class: Parents are paired with their kids to dance and exercise through Zumba. Classes are held in the FCSN East Bay Center Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

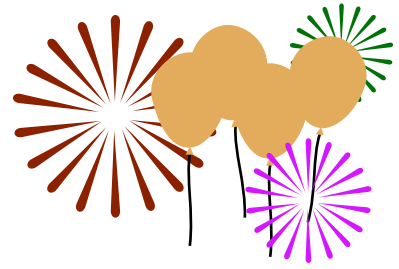
PAST EVENTS

FCSN'S YEARLY FAMILY CAMPING AT YIN'S RANCH

FCSN families enjoyed 50 acres of fun at this resort in Vacaville on June 11th-12th. Our families have the option of indoor and outdoor camping. During the day, there are great activities, sports and games, indoor swimming, relaxing under the trees, nature walks, and fishing. When meal time comes, every family brings a favorite dish to share with everyone. In the evening, families enjoy night hiking and roasting marshmallows. See you all in June 2019 for what Auntie Anna calls the "Disneyland of Camping."



FCSN 2018 GALA: ONE ANNUAL NIGHT OF FUN, FAMILY, AND FRIENDSHIP



By Wesley Hu | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter

More than 800 friends and family attended FCSN's 17th Fundraising Gala at the Santa Clara Convention Center on November 3rd, 2018, to raise money to support programs for children and adults with special needs.

Lights onstage flared and the music dramatically signaled the beginning of the gala. Attendees, dressed in splendid business suits and evening gowns, took their seats. The South Bay Adult Day Program Percussion Ensemble launched the evening's entertainment, performing "Mission Impossible," "Oye Como Va," and "Por una Cabeza." Colored lights flashed across the room resembling the fanfare of a wild concert lamp as the audience cheered on the performers.

Co-President CK Lee gave a brief speech about the history of support for FCSN and described his vision for FCSN's future. A performer himself, CK drew much applause when he sang "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees! As many special needs providers have recently closed down due to the increasing cost of living in California, CK's performance served to remind guests that FCSN continues to "Stay Alive" but needs the support of donors. On Gala night, CK encouraged attendees to help FCSN reach its fundraising goal of \$150,000.

As he left the stage, lights in the room dimmed, and a video on large screens began to play, featuring Austin Chen, the first FCSN artist to have his work displayed at Friends Coffee & Tea, the San Jose coffee shop that is FCSN's latest venture to provide vocational training for clients. The video featuring Austin recounted his journey and the obstacles that he has overcome with

FCSN's help. His parents' persistence and support enabled Austin to work with ceramics teachers, move beyond his frustration, and improve his skills. His interest in ceramics has continuously grown until he has reached the place where he is making impressive pieces of artwork from clay. Austin appeared on stage with his parents and drew applause. At the end of his touching video, the Emcee Matt Keller, an ABC7 KGO-TV anchor and reporter, asked each attendee to look at the succulent centerpieces that adorned the tables and recognize the ceramic pots as Austin's latest handcrafted creation. Members of the audience were invited to purchase the potted plants at the end of the evening as a contribution to FCSN. There was a shuffle of activity as attendees moved in for closer looks and voiced intentions to buy the flower pots.

Gerrye Wong, the Fund-a-Need Host, took the stage and began to joke with the crowd. She unveiled the donation thermometer—a twenty-foot-tall meter that gauged audience donations toward the evening's goal of \$150,000 to fund programs such as job training and enrichment programs that will discover and develop FCSN clients' abilities and talents. The evening's event is FCSN's primary fundraiser. To encourage the audience to help fund upcoming FCSN programs, she added an incentive of raffle tickets. Every thousand dollars donated would put the generous donator's name on a raffle ticket to be drawn for a glossy, signed poster from the movie *Crazy Rich Asians*. The poster was signed by all of the film's main actors. One tense raffle drawing later, a lucky participant won the poster, and another won the raffle for a Golden State Warriors basketball package with second-row courtside seat tickets!



Link to Video: <https://tinyurl.com/y983uq8d>

The evening's performances included a callback to Chinese culture with the FCSN Chinese Music Ensemble playing various traditional Chinese instruments, including the drums and Erhu for a melodic rendition of the "Golden Snake." All eight performers, led by Ms. Yangqin Zhao, later switched to percussion instruments. Synchronous drum sounds as rhythmic as heartbeats pounded, the audience watching in awe.

The Dream Seekers paraded on stage for "Happy Together" and the "Pink Panther Chair Dance." Their colorful shirts blended with the chair hues as they danced around as five solo performers took the spotlight in the front row. Add to that their baseball caps, creating a mesmerizing array of colors flowing in all directions as they danced on stage. Family Zumba Dancers created a frenzy of dance as they jumped, danced, and moved on stage, parents often pairing up to dance with their children and demonstrate simultaneously an aerobic workout.

Prior to dinner and the main program, attendees had an opportunity to mill around several tables of silent auction items, including a beautiful painting of a house near a forest, an ornate vase, and a large meal at Black Angus. There were also dozens of raffle items on display.

Near the evening's end, Emcee Matt Keller stepped onto the stage to choose the raffle winners. Sticking his hand into a giant rotating barrel of orange raffle tickets, the audience collectively held its breath and delivered a tense drumroll. He withdrew several well-chosen names from the barrel, and the prizes' respective sponsors proudly presented the winners with their awards onstage.

Matt humorously said, "You all are clapping hoping that one of you won something!"

The Music Camp Orchestra, a summer workshop group that formed over three days with only a few hours practice, performed "Star Wars Medley" while dressed up as the titular characters of Star Wars: Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Darth Vader.



Then, they played "Ghostbusters" for the gala attendees while twenty-two East Bay Dancers crowded the stage dancing the Macarena. When the orchestra played The Beatles' "Twist & Shout," the East Bay Dancers pranced energetically to bring the evening to a dramatic, jazzy close. Attendees and performers flooded toward the foot of the stage to create a dance party to commemorate the momentous gathering!

With that, another annual gala had come and gone. In total, for the 2018 gala, attendees' donation and pledges that came in after the evening's event achieved the fundraising goal of \$150,000. FCSN is so grateful for the continued support of parents who work tirelessly to give their children a solid foundation for the future and to community members who support the effort to build a community for individuals with special needs and their families to find love, hope, respect, and support through integrated community involvement. The 2018 gala shows the heart and the appreciation that individuals and families pledge to the generous drivers of FCSN.



PAST EVENTS



MUSIC+HOPE AND FCSN PRESENT

MUSIC + HOPE BENEFIT CONCERT



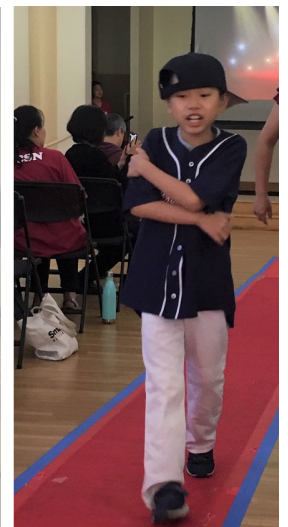
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PAST EVENTS

DREAM ACHIEVERS PERFORM IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

By **Johnna M. Laird** | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter & Parent

The Dream Achievers Band made its first East Coast appearance in Fall 2018, entertaining in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital.

The band performed for two nights, back-to-back, at the Friday night Gala and the Saturday night Celebration Dinner Party for the United Chinese Americans (UAC) convention held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in September. UAC, a nationwide, nonprofit and nonpartisan federation, identifies as a community civic movement to inspire, enrich, and empower Chinese American communities to become involved in civic engagement, political participation, heritage-sharing and youth development to create a greater understanding between the U.S. and China to benefit all Americans and the world.

The event marked UAC's second convention, and Dream Achievers performed 14 songs.

Highlighting the three-day trip for Chris Hebert, proud parent of guitarist Gregory Hebert, was "seeing how well band members were received and getting the comments we get a lot—people think they play really well and are shocked to learn that the band members have special needs."

Band organizer Anna Wang, proud parent of singer-drummer-saxophonist Lawrence Wang, says the highlight for her was "the band's stunning performance. No one expected such a professional band from the special needs community. Asians with special needs are plagued with stigma. Some parents, moved to tears, were fully inspired by the band's performance."

While the trip's focus was the band's performance, the band and their families did not miss the chance to see the nation's capital. Anna describes the trip as "perform, eat, and sightsee."

The capital's monuments, including the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, were among the sights they visited.

"The kids knew all about the monuments we were seeing," says Chris about the band members. "We did not have to do any explaining."

Greg, widely known in the FCSN community as the train master for his expertise of trains and their history, made time to visit Union Station, "a huge landmark for train buffs" explains Chris.

For Alice Jen, band pianist who performed at Carnegie Hall last February, the trip highlight was staying in a hotel and eating breakfast at McDonald's every single morning, says her mom, Jia, who adds: "Every time the Dream Achievers go to a gig, far or near, Alice and I are excited. I am thankful that the band has made it this far and I am so proud of them."

The trip to Washington, D.C., also gave the band yet another opportunity to accomplish its mission of changing public awareness about the abilities of individuals with special needs, expanding perspectives and altering mindsets by giving audiences an in-person experience of the talents that may lie beneath the surface, ready to be tapped of special needs individuals.

The band, now in its seventh year, has performed in Beijing, China, and gives about 70 performances annually in the Bay Area and throughout California.



From Left: Anna and Lawrence Wang, Grey and his dad Chris Hebert, Alice Jen and her mom Jia Mei.

FIRST BUS TRIP WITH FCSN BRINGS A PLEASANT SURPRISE

By Wesley Hu | FCSN Dream Builders Reporter

On the last day of September, I attended my first FCSN field trip. I felt scared because I didn't know if the long bus ride was going to be a good experience for me. I seldom go on long bus journeys, especially with people I haven't met before. Coming from a past FCSN volunteer's perspective, I found this event broke new ground for me.

The apprehension I felt melted away when I arrived at Jack London State Historic Park in Glen Ellen, about 90 minutes north of San Francisco between Santa Rosa and Sonoma. Hiking up the short mountain trail, I saw a boulder enclosed by a small wooden fence. The adjacent plaque told me this boulder marked the place where the famous California writer Jack London lay resting. I felt a pang of sadness knowing that the remains of London, who wrote *The Call of the Wild*, *The Sea-Wolf*, and *The Valley of the Moon* among other internationally recognized novels, lay beneath my feet. A few thousand feet away stood the magnificent stone frame of a hollowed-out house. As the park guide explained, Jack London painstakingly built the twenty-six bedroom house only to have a wooden stove burn down the entire property prior to moving in. Living in the Bay Area, I find it hurts to see real estate property value go to waste! The park spans 1,400 acres with 29 hiking trails and is nicknamed "Beauty Ranch." Originally valued at \$50,000 in 1911, the house is easily worth tens of millions today. Overall, it felt great to me to get away from the busy pace of metropolitan life and soak in the vastness of the mountainside. Plus, I had the chance to see a relic of the past—a person's story recorded for everyone to see.

Back on the bus, we stopped in Yountville, Napa Valley's culinary heart, for lunch at a fancy French restaurant, Les Pascals Patisserie et Boulangerie. The waiter there was more than friendly! He not only served delicious rainbow trout topped with toasted almonds but also created a fine dining atmosphere. Just writing about this makes my mouth water. No wonder French restaurants get higher reviews than other restaurants!

I visited a quiet glass art shop not far from the restaurant as we walked around town. In the calm ambience of the store, I could even hear my heartbeat. Strolling amid magnificent glass animals, I eyed a frog so lifelike that it felt like it would hop out at any moment! I was afraid to stay too long in case I accidentally shattered some priceless piece of glass art!

During the air-conditioned bus ride home, I experienced a thousand thoughts racing through my mind. For starters, I was in awe of how well-behaved the FCSN children were. My sister, Iris, has autism, which gives rise to certain

dysfunctional communication issues. Much of my parents' 14-hour day involves teaching Iris to do her homework properly and supervising her meals, sleep, and hygiene. It's more than a full-time job in itself. Having the children of multiple families—each with children with special needs—behave well on a field trip seemed like an insurmountably hard task; yet, these proud parents pulled it off. All of them may look like ordinary parents, but they are really super parents.

I was moved by the effort that these parents made to give their children a field trip opportunity. It's challenging enough to bring kids on such a long bus ride, to

say nothing of bringing children with special needs on such a trip. I am not a parent; but talking about daily child struggles with several parents, I was able to step into their shoes for a moment. To see the hearts of 22 parents united in helping their children at any cost was very touching.

Being a past FCSN volunteer prepared me for this heartwarming experience that I encountered during this field trip. I saw the grave of a famous writer, enjoyed the fine cuisine of a French restaurant, and basked in the stillness of a glass shop. Thinking back, I have concluded that my parents and all the other FCSN parents are incredible in an invisible way: they unconditionally care for their children's well-being despite the stresses that accompany that challenge each day. Seeing each parent face their own challenges with a smile inspires me to be a part of this incredible family called FCSN!



LET'S GET COOKING!



By **Claudia Pina** | East Bay Living Service Program Manager

Although a healthy diet is essential to enjoying an active life, people often associate healthy eating with bland, boring dishes, making it really difficult for anyone to willingly stick to such a diet. To address this problem, FCSN Supported Living Services (SLS) has created innovative and fun ways to incorporate healthy cooking into the lives of our clients with events like the “FCSN Iron Chef Cooking Contest” held last August 30 where clients competed by bringing their best recipes to share.

Recognizing that one day of healthy eating is just not enough, the SLS staff sought to develop a more permanent way for clients to share their ideas and have access to their peers’ recipes. That is how the FCSN “**Let’s Get Cooking!**” **Recipe Book** came to life.

In this recipe book, clients are featured sharing dishes that they love, creating a tool to inspire and teach others while also being highlighted as the chef to motivate others to try and enjoy their recipes. Each client of FCSN Supported Living Services is featured next to the dish he or she chose to share in this first edition cook book. Recipes include main dishes, simple snacks, and even desserts. Recipes contain healthy ingredients and follow simple steps; the heart and soul of the FCSN SLS family is also woven throughout the pages.

The “**Let’s Get Cooking!**” **Recipe Book** will be available for purchase in February 2019. The FCSN SLS staff hopes the book will inspire others to try healthy recipes, sample new flavors, and create their own delicious dishes.



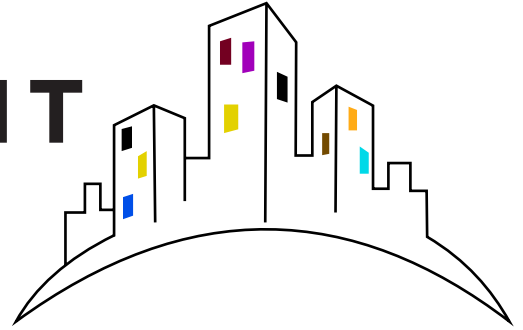
Chef/client David



FCSN Iron Chef Cooking Contest

BUILD A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

By Vivian Chung | FCSN South Bay Program Director



Clients of the South Bay W.I.L.L. Adult Training Program--Work, Integrated, Learn and Live--have had a fruitful year, thanks to collaboration with supportive community partners and FCSN's dedicated staff.

Obstacles to integrating FCSN clients into the community have seemed nearly insurmountable as FCSN has faced unaffordable fees, unwelcoming environments, unsupportive systems, and concerns about client "behavior" and abilities.

However, collaboration with Bob Carlson, an active member of Campbell Rotary Club, and Terry Kao, a volunteer of Tzu Chi Foundations, has brightened prospects for our clients, transforming the outcomes this year for FCSN South Bay W.I.L.L. clients. Local community partners are embracing and supporting us.

As a result, FCSN clients have been accepted to dedicate themselves and contribute their hard work and talents toward making our South Bay community a better place:

- Twice a week, FCSN clients beautify parks by mulching, sanding, planting, pulling weeds, and more.
- They annually participate in the Toy Drive Program for needy children.
- They participate in Meals On Wheels four times per week, delivering hot meals to seniors in need.

The list provides a sampling of some vocational and volunteer activities in which FCSN clients participate. The result is that **FCSN clients and community partners are truly building a vibrant, inclusive community with empathy for others**, and their work is gaining recognition.

Sixteen FCSN clients and four staff members were recognized by Campbell City Councilmembers and Mayor Paul Resnikoff for volunteering more than 1,760 hours to improve Campbell. A ceremony was held June 19, 2018, to present certificates of appreciation for our clients' and staff's contribution in the park projects. Even more importantly, the City of Campbell—seeing what FCSN clients can contribute—is now offering landscape employment to two FCSN clients.

FCSN continuously strives to enrich the lives of and build a brighter future for individuals with special needs, their families, and the communities in which they reside. Expanding our efforts in community volunteering and vocational opportunities through W.I.L.L. is the latest FCSN effort to foster vibrant inclusion of special needs individuals and their families in today's world.



FCSN clients receive recognition from the City of Campbell for their volunteer efforts, totaling more than 1,700 hours.



An FCSN client sands a picnic table to keep park goers from getting splinters

SEP & TDS: ROADMAP TO EMPLOYMENT

By **Claire Go** | SEP Manager

Believing that people with special needs can be successful members of the workforce if given opportunities, support, and training, FCSN established **Supported Employment Program (SEP)** in East Bay in September 2017 and in the South Bay in October 2018 to help clients reach their employment goals.

A small, yet dedicated, SEP team works extremely hard to not only locate possible employment opportunities but also to provide pre-employment training for clients who express interest in finding employment. It is with great pride to share that we have successfully placed 14 clients in competitive employment in East Bay within a year! This is a great accomplishment for FCSN and clients, considering all the hours our SEP team put in to training, job searches, job applications and job coaching to ensure employment and retention.

When we first started, I had doubts about how receptive business owners would be toward hiring our clients. I was pleasantly surprised! With the support of kind-hearted people and businesses that promote inclusion, individuals with special needs are finally getting the chance to be truly integrated in the community.

Aside from SEP, we also recently started our **Tailored Day Service (TDS)** Program, which is aimed at serving clients who won't typically fit in a day program setting. TDS is a very individualized program consisting of a maximum of six hours per week supporting clients in their personal and employment goals. Through TDS, we are able to develop and provide in-depth, hands-on pre-employment training. We currently have 15 TDS clients in the East Bay, six of whom have found employment. We already have referrals for our South Bay TDS which will start in early 2019.

It has been a very hectic year for our Supported Employment Program and Tailored Day Service, but looking at where we are now, I can safely say that it is worth it. Our clients are worth it.

GO SEP! GO TDS!



High Five to Shannon's first pay check



TDS Team @ FCSN East Bay Snack Bar



“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.

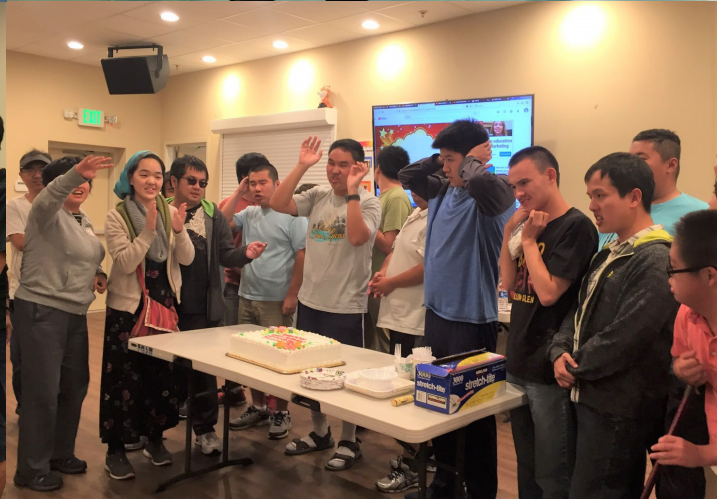
New percussion class with Tri-City Band Corps at FCSN East Bay center



East Bay color guard class with teachers from the Blue Devils Color Guard



Mid-Autumn Festival party on Sept. 23rd at the South Bay Center



Bimonthly birthday party at the South Bay Center

Friends of Children with Special Needs

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South Bay Center: 1029 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose, CA 95129 T: 408-725-8000 F: 408-725-8811

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