

CAAUV VOICE

v15no2 . Fall 2007



ORGANIZING FROM THE GRASSROOTS, BUILDING THE MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.

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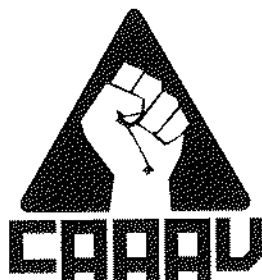
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EDITORS' NOTE

As 2007 comes to an end, we look back at all we have accomplished this year, knowing there is still much to be done in the fight for social justice. This year's *Voice* brings you highlights from our 20th anniversary celebration, the historic United States Social Forum, and the launch of new campaigns in our program areas.

As always, CAAAV strives to engage with other organizations and individuals working toward social justice locally, nationally and globally. This year, over 15,000 of us came together for the first ever US Social Forum (USSF), in recognition of the unique and important role that activists in the US have to ensure "another world is possible, another U.S. is necessary" as part of a broad global movement against neo-liberal globalization. The convergence across communities, sectors, issues and regions represented a significant shift toward a more integrated and powerful movement. As part of the National Planning Committee, CAAAV both helped shape and was shaped by this movement-building process.

We also report to you several new areas for growth in our program areas. The Youth Leadership Project is working on the creation of a Southeast Asian alternative health program and community center in the Bronx, which will provide a home for Southeast Asian culture and organizing in

the Bronx. The Chinatown Justice Project and the Chinatown Tenants Union celebrated a huge victory in two buildings this year. As part of the national "Right to the City" coalition, CJP will be working with other organizations fighting gentrification and displacement. Through the USSF, Women Workers Project joined with 11 other organizations to form the National Alliance of Domestic Workers. WWP and the other NY domestic workers groups will host the next alliance gathering to help push for the passage of the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

In recognition and appreciation of the members who work tirelessly in our program areas on our various campaigns, we will profile one member in each program area in our update section. Hopefully this personal look at the people behind our work will inspire you to get involved in CAAAV's work.

We also remember Kazu Iijima, one of our board members, and long-time Asian American movement activist who recently passed away. We will miss her dearly, and in her memory, continue our organizing to build the power of Asian immigrant communities.

Thank you all for being a part of CAAAV's work.

— THE EDITORS

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CAAUV VOICE

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In Memory of **KAZU IJIMA**

ON AUGUST 26, 2007 KAZU IJIMA, A MEMBER OF CAAHV'S BOARD of Directors and a visionary leader in the Asian American movement for many decades, passed away. Born in 1918, Kazu's life spanned both world wars, Japanese American Internment, and the Vietnam War, through which she was greatly inspired by resistance of communities of color to oppression, particularly the Black Power movement.

Having been involved in the progressive movement since she was a teenager in California, she modeled lifelong, unwavering dedication to social change. Kazu was one of the founders of Asian Americans for Action, which was born in the midst of protests against the Vietnam War. In addition, she helped form the Organization of Asian Women, a feminist Asian American movement organization. She was also a founding member of CAAHV and served on the newsletter committee for many years, along with serving on the Board of Directors, both in the early years and more recently.

Kazu was a regular in marches and protests for racial and economic justice. Many of us met Kazu on the picket line, or in an anti-war march. Somehow, Kazu was present for every major struggle involving working-class communities of color and immigrants for decades.

Kazu represents the legacy of commitment and consciousness, humility and optimism that characterizes the best of what our movement has to offer. CAAHV holds Kazu's contributions to the organization and to the movement dear. She is a part of all of us, and we will do our best to carry forward her life's work of activism and organizing in the Asian community.

**Special thanks to Mint Liu, Monona Yin and AsianWeek for their help with this article.*



The First United States Social Forum

**ORGANIZING FROM
THE GRASSROOTS,
BUILDING THE
MOVEMENT IN
THE U.S.**

ON JUNE 27TH, 2007, OVER 15,000, MOSTLY WORKING-CLASS people of color gathered in Atlanta, Georgia under the banner, "Another World is Possible, Another U.S. is Necessary" at the first United States Social Forum. They marched through the streets of Atlanta to kick off

a powerful week of dialogue and exchange. The Forum consisted of over 700 workshops, cultural events and multiple plenary sessions daily covering six key themes: Gender and Sexuality, War and Militarism, Immigrant Rights, Workers Rights, Gulf Coast Reconstruction, and Indigenous Sovereignty.

Participating in this multi-racial, intergenerational, multi-sectored convergence organizations like CAAAV were strengthened, along with and as part of a national grassroots movement.

BACKGROUND

The World Social Forum (WSF) has been

taking place annually since 2001 under the banner "Another World Is Possible" in countries such as Brazil, India and Kenya as an open space for movements to converge and discuss alternatives to the top-down, neo-liberal economic plans that endanger workers and human rights, as well as the sovereignty of nations and Indigenous peoples around the world. Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ), a network of grassroots membership organizations in the U.S. who sends delegations of people of color to participate in the WSF, was moved by both the opportunity for convergence that the social forum process provided, and the responsibility that we have as

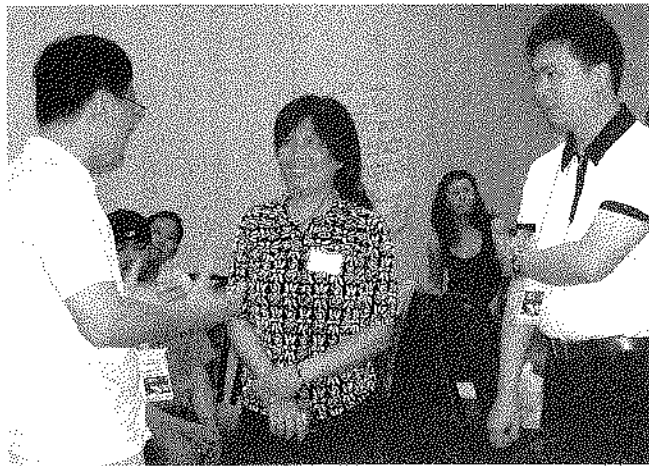
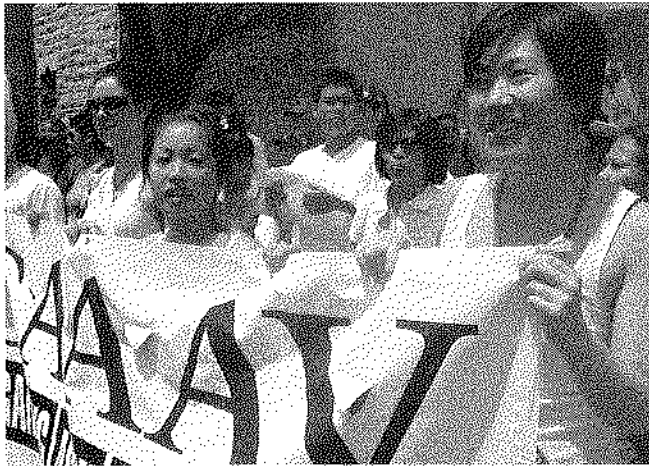
U.S.-based organizations to support the strengthening of the social justice movement from within the U.S. Learning from grassroots movements around the world at the Social Forums, it became clear that the U.S. plays a leadership role in maintaining the current political economic direction in the world; creating another world, means addressing the U.S. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina also revealed to the rest of the world the naked oppression that the

U.S. engages in within its own borders. After several years of investigating how a U.S. Social Forum could be organized, GGJ convened the National Planning Committee, prioritizing leadership of grassroots membership-based organizations of color, in order to ensure the presence, participation and leadership of the communities at the front lines of neo-liberal globalization inside the U.S. CAAAV had the honor of being a part of the National Planning Committee, helping with outreach in the Northeast region, and in the planning of plenaries.

Twenty-five CAAAV members representing each of the program areas attended this year's USSF to learn and share experiences, analysis, strategies, and challenges with other organizations and communities. CAAAV members went to Atlanta with questions and experiences from New York Asian communities' to share, including fights against gentrification and for tenants rights, fights for the rights of domestic workers, for services that meet the needs of refugee families who continue to survive the traumas associated with war and displacement, and fights for the inclusion of grassroots voices in the current immigration debates.

crystallized these goals and created a sense of excitement for what could be expected in the next five days. For some younger members of CAAAV the USSF Opening March was their first-ever march experience. For other CAAAV members, this was the largest march they had been a part of. Amidst thousands of other marchers, banners, flags, hand-made posters, drum beats, shared water bottles, and intense Atlanta heat, CAAAV chanted and sang spiritedly in English, Chinese, and Spanish for over four hours without break. Members took turns leading chants in different languages, and encouraged each other to keep up the momentum. The Opening March invited and moved participants to envision another U.S. and another world as a reality.

One major objective for CAAAV's involvement in the USSF was to make tangible connections with other organizations doing similar work across the United States. While relationships have been built over phone meetings, emails, and conferences, the USSF provided a rare opportunity for organizations to meet face-to-face for six whole days. As a part of the Right to the City alliance, CAAAV was part of panel discussions to share strategies and stories of organizing around gentrification and displacement. CAAAV members also attended the "Workers Rights in the Global Economy" plenary where Ai-jen Poo, CAAAV staff and Domestic Workers United lead organizer, announced the creation of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, consisting of thirteen organizations from four cities nationally. Many organizations also decided



CAAAV AT THE USSF

The USSF Opening March

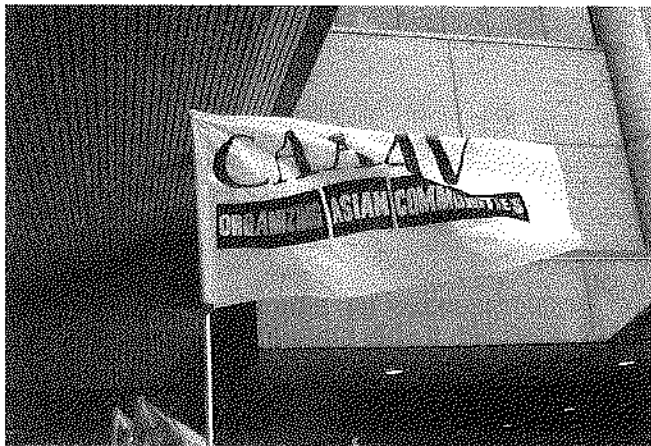




to hold less formal gatherings to continue building behind the scenes. CAAAV, along with several other Asian Pacific Islander organizations, including Asian Pacific Environmental Network and Chinese Progressive Association, planned a dinner exchange where members of Asian organizations broke out into smaller groups to talk about what their organizations do, the issues facing their specific communities, and what they have learned from the USSF that could be applied to their work.

MOVING FORWARD

The USSF allowed CAAAV members to see the work here in New York City as intimately linked with the work of other organizations and communities across the country and around the globe. As a reflection of the social justice movement, in all its strengths and weaknesses, the forum in Atlanta demonstrated the overwhelming potential of the grassroots movement to create change. Whether it was hearing about the movement of the urban poor in the Philippines, networking and dialoguing with other API organizations, hearing from domestic workers organizations all around the country, or learning how to integrate spirituality and sustainability into the work that CAAAV does, members felt transformed, and for many, part of a real movement for the first time. Now the question is, where do we go from here? How can we continue to build from this experience in our communities and nationally? We look forward to continuing to learn and grow together with the movement as we attempt to answer these questions.



REFLECTIONS

MS. LIANG of CAAAV's Chinatown Tenants Union, felt moved by the Immokalee farm workers' experiences of winning a significant pay increase from McDonald's, which she felt has, "sparked and inspired a national movement" to rise up against multinational corporate giants from the grassroots.

MS. ZHENG, also a member of Chinatown Tenants Union, was inspired when Domestic Workers United performed their original calypso song

that reminded her of revolutionary songs of her childhood that she thought she would never be able to hear or sing again.

SAVANNARITH CHY of the Youth Leadership Project of CAAAV remembers the API dinner exchange fondly as a "roomful of Asian people who own their work." Reuniting with old friends from other Southeast Asian organizations gave him the warm feelings of a "fresh start."

DOREEN KRAMER of CAAAV's Asian Resistance Media came back from the USSF with a deeper knowledge of what it means to "learn how to care for ourselves and each other, to address the internal dynamics and practice our ideals for the benefit of the work and our spirits." She looks forward to applying this perspective to CAAAV's ongoing work, have realized that I can feel safe again and that I too can seek the justice that we all deserve."

Building a Labor Movement That Moves

The following is an excerpt from a speech by Ai-jen Poo, lead organizer of Domestic Workers United and staff member of CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities at the first United States Social Forum held in Atlanta, Georgia. This speech was presented at the plenary session entitled Workers' Rights in the Global Economy on June 30, 2007.



Ai-jen Poo of CAAAV and Domestic Workers United.

Atlanta is an historic place for domestic workers. In 1880, African American domestic workers—or “washerwomen”—shut down the city of Atlanta in protest of the endless hours of work and low wages. And in 1968, the National Domestic Workers' Union was formed here in Atlanta by civil rights activist and domestic worker Dorothy Boulden. We are so proud to carry on that powerful tradition of resistance. And we want to take it further, that's what we want to focus on tonight.

What kind of labor movement do we need to take it further? We hope to build our labor movement to a place where when we call for a strike as domestic workers, it will be for domestic workers rights and for global justice, legalization for undocumented workers and an end the war in Iraq. Or maybe, maybe it will be a strike of all informal sector workers, or better yet, a strike of all workers—union and non-union—the entire working class against neoliberalism and displacement—from Brooklyn to Iraq, from Chinatown to the Philippines, from El Barrio to Botswana. We want to be a part of a labor movement that brings the power of workers to bear on the system in a way that lifts the entire working-class, both here and abroad.

So how do we get there? Well we've got a few ideas to throw out there and see what you think.

We need lead organizer training infrastructure that combats individualism, and encourages collective, organizational and movement-building thinking and action.

We need organizations of the Left that are rooted and deeply connected to working-class communities, who can support the re-development of mass class consciousness.

We need capacity to bring independent worker organizing to scale.

We need union organizing that brings working-class consciousness, internationalism, and racial and gender justice to the center.

We need respectful collaboration and coordination between

independent worker organizing and unions in the interest of the entire working class.

We need multi-lingual, multi-national organizing strategies that understand that language is power, and we have the opportunity to create new language together across differences.

We need worker organizing that involves and engages entire families and communities.

We need worker organizing that understands culture as a vehicle for working-class power-building.

We need increased coordination and dialogue across workers and working-class organizations to reflect together on the conditions, lessons of past organizing, and long-term strategies to build worker power locally, nationally and internationally.

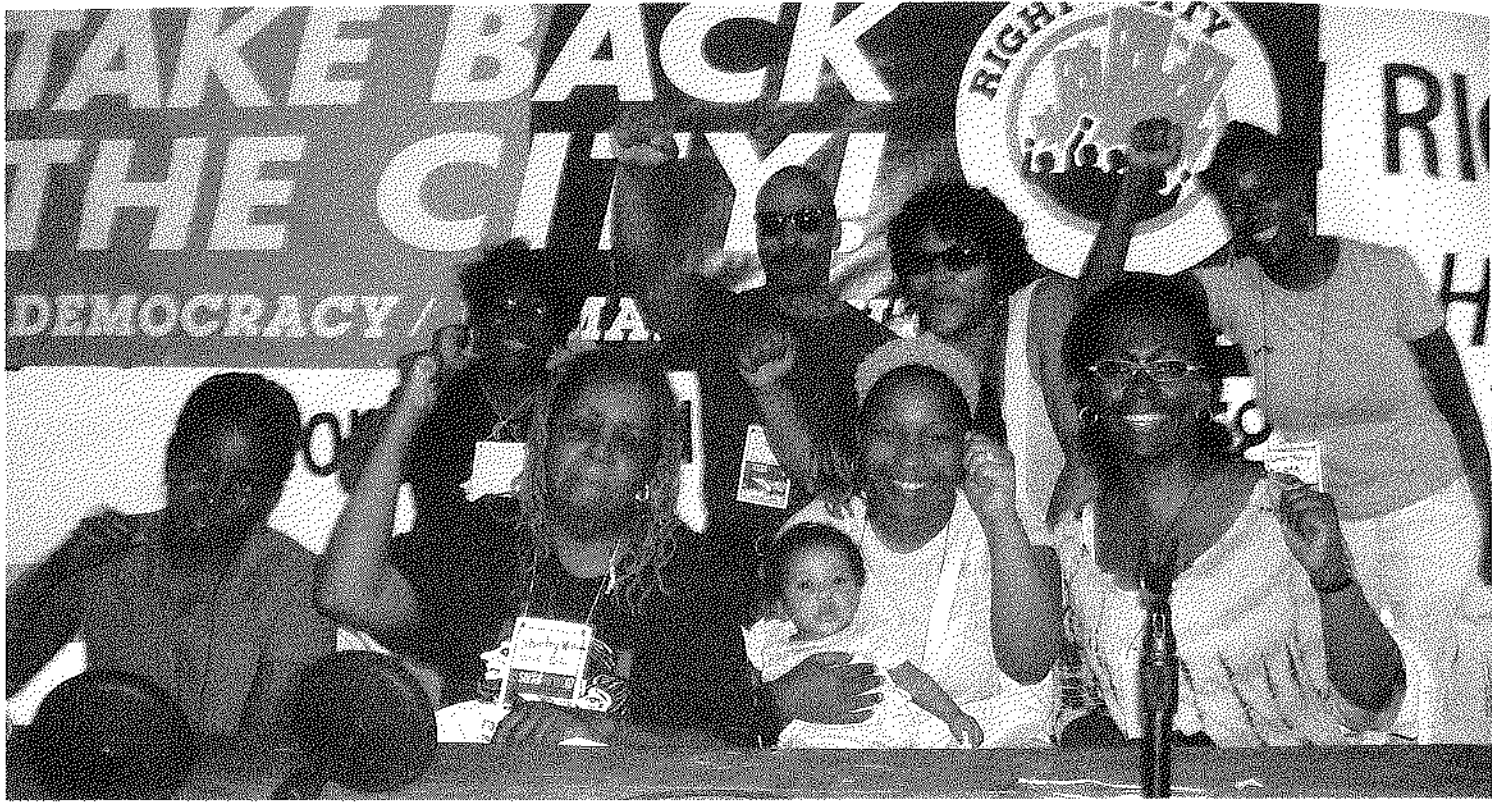
We need exchange and exposure with unions in the global South, who organize around economic issues like wages and hours in a way that builds the broader social movement—like in the Philippines, Argentina or South Africa—where unions are centrally involved in land struggles, anti-privatization struggles, and connect their economic issues to those of other communities in struggle.

We need study, we need to understand the theory and ideology that has helped oppressed people and workers win justice for generations.

We need training and practice in analyzing the class interests in any and all situations—and sharing these assessments and lessons across sectors of the working-class, because we lose power when we're not clear on this.

We need to take up race and gender, as fundamental to any worker organizing strategy. We will never have an accurate understanding of class in the United States—or how to build the power of the working-class—until we understand the way that race, gender, and the legacy of slavery fundamentally shape the political economy and labor in the United States.

“We want to be a part of a labor movement that brings the power of workers to bear on the system in a way that lifts the entire working-class, both here and abroad.”



Right to the City

ORGANIZING FROM THE GRASSROOTS, BUILDING THE MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.

Jimmy Boggs, the late—and great—Black revolutionary from Detroit once said that “the city is the Black man’s land.” The city is truly the Black man’s land—it is also the land of Black women, LGBTQ communities, immigrants from around the world

and the working-class. But with cities across the United States—and the world—becoming the playground of the wealthy, what is the future of our urban centers? Will they remain spaces where working-class people of color can live, work, and play or will they become “global cities” that serve only the interests of capital? A new national alliance—of which CAAAV is a part—says that yes, cities can and will stay, in

Boggs’s words, the Black man’s—and by extension people of color, immigrants, and working class communities’—land.

NEW YORK CITY — WHAT’S CAUSING GENTRIFICATION?

Over the past decade, working-class urban communities across the United States have experienced displacement at a scale not seen since the 1960s, when extremely euphemistically named “ur-

ban renewal” programs destroyed more than 1,600 Black neighborhoods. Skyrocketing rents, mass evictions, and low-wage jobs have eroded vibrant historic communities that are now being replaced with luxury condominiums, shopping centers, and tourist attractions. In New York City, neighborhoods like Harlem, El Barrio, Washington Heights, the South Bronx, and Chinatown that have traditionally been home to low-income working-class people of color, including immigrants, are quickly becoming enclaves for the middle class and the wealthy. Says Chinatown resident and Chinatown Tenants Union member Zhi Qin Zheng, “The changes are incredible—rents are going up all the time and landlords are trying to evict us in whatever way they can.”

PHOTO: JIMMY BOGGS



Chinatown is a neighborhood that traditionally is an entry-point for working-class Chinese immigrants and a place for them to work, live, and play. But walk through Chinatown today, and you'll see hotels where small affordable stores used to be, luxury condos with price tags starting at more than \$1 million, Soho style bars and boutiques and huge multinational banks dominating the city streets.

Unlike the 1960s, when "urban renewal" programs were the major cause of the displacement of communities of color, today's assault on communities of color is due to—and the logical outcome of—neo-liberal economic policies and the demands of global capitalism. The historic under-development of urban centers—the historic home of people of color and the working class—coupled with the increasing call for cities to be transnational economic centers, or "command centers" for the dispersed "globalized" production process, have all contributed to the rising displacement.

While the neo-liberal assault has been unremitting, a new national alliance called Right to the City—of which CAAAV is a part—is breathing hope into city residents' struggle against displacement and gentrification.

Chinatown Tenants Union organizer Helena Wong said, "Our tenant members are being illegally evicted by their landlords and kicked out of their homes. They struggle to afford rising rents, or they have no heat, hot water, or electricity because their landlord refuses to make repairs. One of the great aspects

of Right to the City is that it's given us a framework to see that what our members are going through in their homes and buildings here in New York City is the result of broader forces at work in the world. It's helped us become more focused and also more strategic in the battles we choose to fight."

ABOUT RIGHT TO THE CITY

The Right to the City alliance, or RTTC for short, is a newly formed coalition of base-building groups like CAAAV from cities across the United States, as well as ally organizations and individuals, that is calling for a united response to gentrification and displacement. The groups stand together under the simple yet radical idea that people and especially urban working-class communities have a right to the places and spaces where they live.

The RTTC alliance has 12 principles of unity, including: **Land for People vs. Land for Speculation**, having the right to land and housing that is free from market speculation and that serves the interests of community building, sustainable communities in all their facets; **Economic Justice**, the right of working class communities of color, women, queer and transgender people to an economy that serves their interests; **Indigenous Justice**, the right of First Nation indigenous people to their ancestral lands that have historical or spiritual significance, regardless of state borders and urban or rural settings; **Environmental Justice**, the right to sustainable and healthy neighborhoods and workplaces, healing, quality health care, and reparations for the legacy of toxic abuses such as brown fields, cancer clusters, and superfund sites; **Freedom from Police and State Harassment**, the right to safe neighborhoods and protection from police, INS/ICE, and vigilante repression which has historically targeted communities of color, women, queer and transgender people; and **Immigrant Justice**, the right of equal ac-

cess to housing, employment, and public services regardless of race, ethnicity, and immigration status and without the threat of deportation by landlords, ICE, or employers.

The organizations formally came together as the Right to the City alliance in January 2007 with the goal of building "a national urban movement for housing, education, health, racial justice, and democracy." Locally, CAAAV is helping build Right to the City-New York. Nationally, CAAAV serves on the RTTC Steering Committee, helping to develop a strategy and a vision for a national—and international—movement against gentrification, displacement, and neo-liberalism.

RTTC officially launched at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia this past June. More than 20 groups from eight major cities—Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Miami, Boston, the D.C. metro area, and New York City—went to Atlanta, and the excitement surrounding the alliance was high. At the Social Forum, the RTTC alliance held eight workshops, all of which were filled to capacity.

"I think the amazing response at the Social Forum was because people across the U.S. feel the need for this sort of unified framework and analysis of neo-liberalism and gentrification," said CTU organizer Mansee Kong.

The hope is that this analysis, which highlights the historical and ongoing forces that cause gentrification and displacement and links them both to global capitalism and international struggles, will lead to a movement that preserves cities as home to communities of color and the working class. People should have a right to live, work and play where they are, where they have roots.

So what's next for the alliance? According to RTTC's national coordinator Valerie Taing, the alliance plans on expanding to include Chicago and New Orleans and is also exploring ways to both strengthen the capacity of local bases and promote regional exchanges, as well as increasing collective knowledge and power.

For more information on the Right to the City alliance, please visit the website at <http://www.righttothecity.org>.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

ASIAN RESISTANCE MEDIA

CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO live in Chinatown rent their apartments, living in overcrowded and dilapidated tenement buildings that are over one hundred years old. Since the mid- to late 1990's, there have been many changes in the community. Many long time low-income tenants are being forcibly evicted, as more and more young professionals see Chinatown as a central location to live. As the supply of affordable housing decreases throughout the city, developers are taking this opportunity to gentrify the community, making

it friendlier for those who can pay higher rents.

Gentrification pressures have increased especially after September 11th, with the real estate industry looking at Chinatown as the "last frontier" for development in Manhattan. Because priority has not been given to equitable and inclusive development, there is a serious risk of large-scale displacement for the thousands of low-income residents who currently live and work there; and along with it, increased harassment of youth in public spaces (e.g. parks) and small entrepreneurs (e.g. street vendors and merchants who cater to the working-poor).

When the last *Voice* went to print, we were in the beginning stages of a building-wide campaign on Delancey Street where the tenants were orga-

nizing around their landlord's neglect and disregard for their housing conditions. For six months, members of the Chinatown Tenants Union and tenants from 55 and 61 Delancey Street held meetings with the manager of the building, participated in a rent strike, organized rallies, and talked to the press about their conditions and how they were fighting for changes. In the end, many of the original demands were met—tenants got repairs, heat and hot water, a new intercom system, and rent abatements—to name a few of their victories.

While we have a lot to be proud of, we also know that these two buildings are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of how many tenants and buildings there are out there to organize. This is why we recognize that while it is important to continue to build our

CJP MEMBER PROFILE: CJP'S DYNAMIC DUO

NAMES: Zhi Qin Zheng and Bin Liang

MEMBERS SINCE: 2004

WHAT MAKES THEM COOL: With the support of youth in CJP, staff, and other members, Ms. Liang and Ms. Zheng have been the driving force in the creation of the Chinatown Tenants Union (in 2005) and have worked tirelessly to build it into an organization with over 1,300 supporters. Through rain, snow, blistering sun, and on good days too, you can find these two women doing outreach in Chinatown. In any given week, they will climb an average of 50 stories, knock on over 150 doors, and talk to over 100 people about the Chinatown Tenants Union in Fujianese, Cantonese, AND Mandarin. They bring the voices of low-income Chinatown residents to community board meetings, city-wide coalitions, and national alliances. At the same time they are recognized walking down the street, buying groceries in the community, and are go-to people for advice and information.

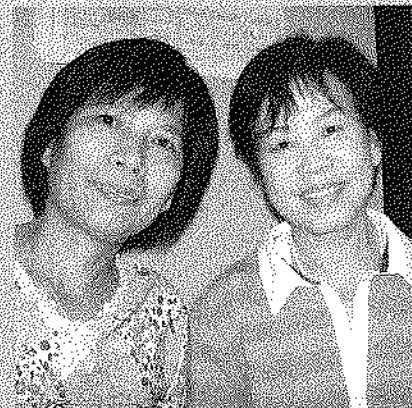
WHO ARE THEY? WHY DID THEY JOIN CAAAV?

ZHI QIN ZHENG, Born: December 12, 1954. From: Fuzhou, China

Ms. Zheng was sponsored by her family and immigrated in 1983. A mother of four, she has lived in Chinatown for over 20 years. Ms. Zheng worked in a garment factory up until September 11th, when there was no more work. She found her way to CAAAV via her relative, who CAAAV worked with around her housing issues. She's stayed with CAAAV through the years to build the CTU, and is interested in seeing where it goes.

BIN LIANG, Born: September 26, 1951. From: Fuzhou, China

Ms. Liang was sponsored by her husband and immigrated in 1998. She was a teacher in China for over 30 years, and continues to teach Chinese to children in Chinatown and Queens. Ms. Liang has stayed in CAAAV because of it's social justice work and because she wants to continue to help people.



WWP MEMBER PROFILE: EUFROSINA BALDIVIA



Eufrosina Baldivia became involved with WWP at the height of the fight for legalization for undocumented workers. She attended the first town hall meeting in Jackson Heights, Queens to call upon federal legislators to pass a real legalization rather than a guest-worker program, and organized five new members to attend. She had known about WWP since 2000 and had referred many workers who were experiencing abuse, but worked six days per week as a live-in domestic worker herself and could not participate. In early 2004 she called to inform us about another Filipina domestic worker who was about to be sent to the airport by her abusive employers. We were able to stop her from getting sent away, and Manang (the way we address elder sisters in the Philippines) Inday (short for Eufrosina) was able to get more involved, attending a training with the National Network for Immigrant Rights (NNIRR) to develop her skills as an organizer and advocate for other workers with WWP.

base in the community, we have to connect to larger fights around gentrification and displacement.

We are nearing the end of our second year of trying to pass city-wide legislation that will require the City's Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to translate documents and hire bilingual inspectors. Our work in the city-wide coalition, Communities for Housing Equity (CHE), has been fruitful and while we have made gains in pushing internal changes within HPD, the coalition will continue to push for legislation that will codify the changes that HPD are implementing on an administrative level.

Understanding that the conditions our community members face are the symptoms of much larger neo-liberal policies that affect New York City as well as other cities na-

tion-wide, CAAAV joined the Right to the City alliance in January 2007, working with other groups to connect our fights against gentrification and displacement to other cities and urban communities in struggle. We are currently hosting the alliance staff person, Valerie Taing.

year, WWP launched a campaign for justice for one of our members, Ms. Asuncion. WWP members met for six months to determine the organizing strategy to win justice for the abuses she suffered on the job.

Deep in the winter, we protested a residential building on Park Avenue in one of the most affluent areas of New York, the Upper Eastside. The picket helped put pressure on the employers and educate the public about the abuses that Ms. Asuncion and other domestic workers face while working in some of

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT (WWP) continues to organize Asian immigrant domestic workers to gain control over their living and working conditions and help build a broader movement for immigrant rights and social justice. At the beginning of the

the most affluent areas of New York City. Ms. Asuncion's case and the publicity it generated also put pressure on state legislators to pass the Domestic Workers "Bill of Rights," a statewide bill to establish labor standards for domestic workers including

MS. ASUNCION'S STORY

Background:

In December 2000, Ms. Asuncion started to work with her Upper East Side employers, caring for their 2 young children. She cooked, cleaned, ironed, shopped and babysat, working long hours with no overtime pay.

Ms. Asuncion's Experience:

"Soon after petitioning for papers through my employer, I experienced emotional and verbal abuse. The abuse became worse and worse, my employer scolded and insulted me daily as if her day would not be complete without calling me an idiot, stupid, and a moron. She cursed me left and right using "the F-word," and she would throw newspapers and magazines at me. At one point she

even threw a bottle of mustard!

"At the time I thought I was not a person anymore, I just told myself that I had to continue working even though the conditions were unbearable. Everyday I tried to make sure our paths did not cross, so I moved from one room to the other to make sure she wouldn't see me—which was impossible since I was in her home. When I tried to talk to her, she threatened me about my papers. Clearly my employer used my immigration status to abuse and exploit me.

"The Women Worker's Project has given me strength through being with other domestic workers who have the courage to fight for our rights. By advocating for my rights as an immigrant worker, I have realized that I can feel safe again and that I too can seek the justice that we all deserve."

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

a living wage, health care and basic benefits. Excluded from most labor protections and the definition of "employee" in New York labor law, the "Bill of Rights" would bring long overdue respect and recognition to the domestic workforce.

Ms. Asuncion demanded a letter of apology and overtime pay for the 3 years and 8 months she worked. In early spring, WWP members started collecting petitions targeting her employers, demonstrating a growing support for Ms. Asuncion's case. By June, her case was resolved. Women Workers Project members now have another victory to celebrate, showing the power of collective action and organizing.

As a founder and Steering Committee member, Women Workers Project is continuously working with Domestic Workers United to pass "The Domestic Workers Bill of Rights" in New York State. In addition to working on Ms. Asuncion's case, WWP members joined other

domestic workers organizations for a week of action in June, including a Labor Solidarity Breakfast, an Albany Day of Action, and a Town Hall meeting featuring AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and the Commissioner of Labor M. Patricia Smith, faith leaders and worker testimonies. Over 300 people attended the Town Hall. The week of action closed with a march of over 500 domestic workers and supporters down Broadway, to City Hall, followed by a vigil at the African Burial Ground, and finally closed at Foley Square across from the federal immigration offices. *The New York Times*, *Daily News*, *Brooklyn* and *Bronx 12*, *Hoy*, *El Diario* and many other newspapers reported on the actions.

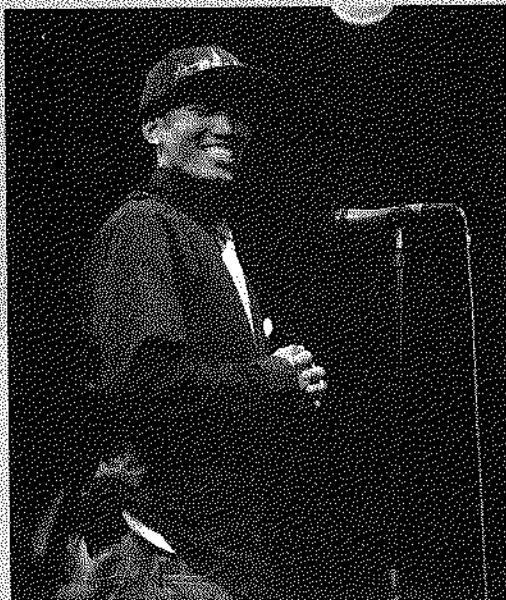
Later in June, WWP participated in the first national meeting of domestic workers organizations as part of the first United States Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia. Fifty workers from thirteen organizations across the country engaged in exchanges,

joint political education, and held two public workshops including one with farm workers and Black workers in the South about the historic exclusions all three groups have faced. The workers' meeting closed with a discussion about the national movement of domestic workers that resulted in the formation of the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP Project continues to organize in the Southeast Asian refugee community of the Bronx, working with young people in developing intergenerational strategies to address community-wide struggles. The summer is YLP's busiest time, as it continues to run the Summer Institute, training new

YLP MEMBER PROFILE: SAVAN NHIL



Savan Nhil is now 21 years old and living in the Bronx with his family. He joined YLP in 1995 as one of the children in our Tutoring Program. To say the least, Savan has developed into a critical organizer and thinker for his community. Savan and his 2 sisters (Savai Nhil and Vanessa Nhil) have remained committed to YLP and the community along with him.

Raised by his grandparents, Savan witnessed the injustice they faced everyday. And it is with a sense of justice that he organizes the community and lives his life. Savan has participated in all of our campaigns and has a lot of knowledge that he is passing to the future Youth Organizers. "It is my duty to help my grandparents and the community. I have goals and dreams for myself but I also have goals and dreams for my community. After what they have gone through you have nothing but respect for them and it has made me who I am today—to want to change the oppressive conditions in their lives and for the new generation of organizers to feel that too. Their struggle is my struggle. I am grateful to YLP and the people in it. I have developed long lasting friendships and a greater sense of how this world runs."

He is now one of the 10 lead organizers in YLP's Health Justice Campaign. He is the advocate, the translator, and the organizer for his family. "I am doing everything the government institutions are supposed to do, so why not do it right and change it?" Savan will continue to grow with YLP and we hope that we continue to be part of his growth personally and politically as well.

generations of leaders and organizers in the community.

On July 22, 2007 YLP unveiled our Southeast Asian Oral History Exhibit with over 60 community members and supporters. The Oral History Exhibit is the coming together of many hours of work on the part of youth organizers, interviewing community members, collecting their stories, images and memories from the past few decades. It is the first time the community's story of having survived war, refugee camps and migration and resettlement in the United States has been collectively told. What we've found is that the process of healing is still unfolding, and that strengthening the health, sense of culture and history, and unity of the community are critical to that process.

The exhibit is part of a health justice campaign in the Southeast Asian community. The experience of war and refugee camps compounded by the challenges of living in poverty in the Bronx, have created poor health conditions for the community. The devastating impact of war on genera-

tions of people was proven through the initial findings of our survey on the community about their health and health care (see charts below).

These findings along with community input allowed us to develop the following demands on the health clinic that serves the Southeast Asian community:

Equal Access for All — Stop the use of unqualified family members and unqualified phone operators for interpretation. It is a life and death situation. Hire and train Vietnamese and Cambodian speakers to provide interpretation, develop materials and a phone system in Southeast Asian languages.

Alternatives to Treatment — It is time for treatments to be in our "language." Develop a program that is both culturally sensitive and provide alternatives to Western medication and choices for patient treatment. For example acupuncture, cupping, massage therapy and horticultural therapy etc. for mental health treatment.

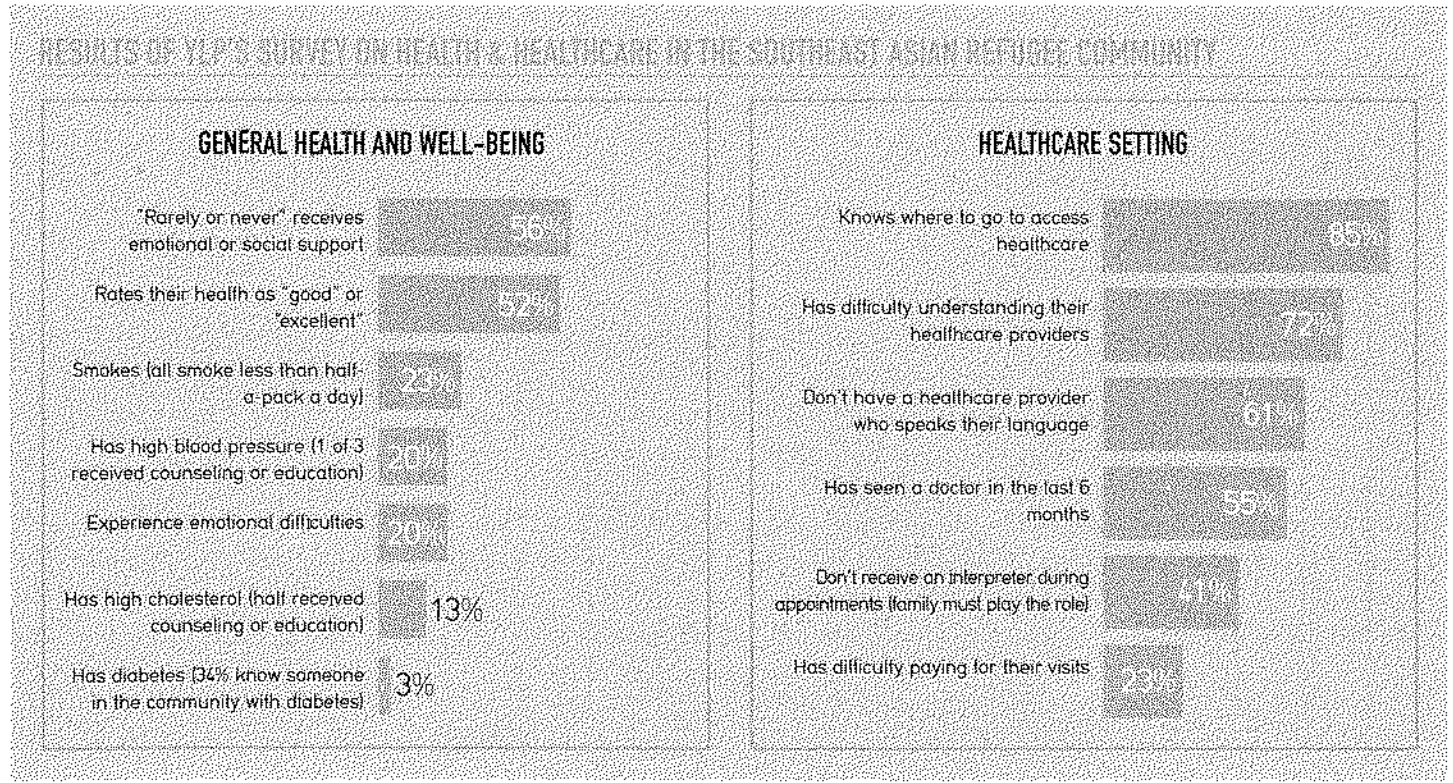
Outreach and Education — The

historical trauma experienced by Southeast refugees has caused them to experience many illnesses including Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, diabetes, and heart disease. We need to develop outreach and education programs about the health risks for Southeast Asians.

Qualified Staffing — Not only is it important that there is adequate staffing in order to sustain and maintain the clinic, but the staff must be trained and understand the history, experience and culture of the community. It should be a priority to hire and recruit Southeast Asians within the Bronx who are qualified.

Integration of Health and Social Services — The Southeast Asian community continues to be underserved. With the lack of services all around there is a necessity to provide social services that meet the needs of the community.

Given that there is an ongoing US war in the Middle East, the Southeast Asian community has a powerful message to share from our experience about the lasting and often untold



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

legacies of war and militarism. We hope that the campaign can also contribute to the growing call for an end to the "War on Terror," in Iraq and around the world.

On August 24, the Youth Trainees finished their summer off by putting together a community event filled with performances and a health fair to support our campaign with health care providers and material translated in Cambodian and Vietnamese. We graduated 11 Youth Trainees to be Youth Organizers.

In the next couple of months we will be focusing on work that will help move our campaign forward including developing a media strategy to raise consciousness and expose the problem to a larger public, continuing outreach to mobilize the community, meeting with leaders in the Southeast Asian community to support and participate in the campaign and meeting with representatives of the local clinic to raise their consciousness and develop a strategy based on where they stand on the issue.

ASIAN RESISTANCE MEDIA

A LITTLE OVER FIVE YEARS after its founding as CAAAV's 15th Anniversary Committee, Asian Resistance Media (ARM) began the year planning another ambitious anniversary event. By all accounts, CAAAV's twentieth anniversary celebration—"Our Roots Grow Deep"—was an incredible success. In addition to the over \$25,000 raised in pledges that night through "Operation: I

Love CAAAV," CAAAV's 20th anniversary celebration also made for a memorable and moving moment in CAAAV's history. The night allowed friends, family, allies, and CAAAV members past and present to pause, to reflect, and to celebrate the community where, for so many of us, our roots are so firmly planted.

In moving towards our goal of organizing a broad base of support and building CAAAV's grassroots donor base, ARM not only coordinated "Our Roots Grow Deep," but is also working with CAAAV's staff to update and improve CAAAV's donor database, published another issue of the *Voice* in March, and began regularly updating and maintaining www.caaav.org. In our effort to directly support CAAAV's community-based campaigns and coalition work, ARM members have been working closely with program area organizers to provide additional capacity, including joining CAAAV's 24 member delegation this year to the United States Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia and helping support anti-gentrification organizing in Chinatown through research and strategic media outreach. And finally, as we continue to develop ARM as a vehicle that enables people to participate in community-led movement-building efforts, we held our first ever mid-year overnight retreat to delve into critical questions about ARM's mission and structure moving forward, particularly now as a volunteer-coordinated and led committee with plans to also continue to work closely in support of groups similar to ARM. With a few months still left in the year, we have a couple more projects in store and hope to see you there.

ARM MEMBER PROFILE: LAUREL MEI TURBIN



Laurel Mei Turbin has been an active ARM member for three years. She grew up in Hawai'i and came to New York three years ago after graduating from UCLA. Laurel, like many ARM members, began forming her political identity in college in women's studies and ethnic studies courses, which are products of organizing efforts like CAAAV's. Eventually, she started to embrace a newfound "self" as an Asian feminist fighting for the dignity of other people of color.

After college, she moved to New York City and immediately began searching for other progressive Asians with whom she could share this commitment. She soon found her community in CAAAV. Through both friendships and working relationships with other middle-class Asians in ARM and the CAAAV constituency of working class Asians, Laurel began to understand that "immigrants, as refugees of the global economy, come to the U.S. to search for work, and end up living in substandard housing and working in low-wage jobs, with women bearing the highest burden. At the same time, our communities are subjected to an immigration and police system that unfairly targets working class and queer people of color." Through ARM and CAAAV, Laurel works to combat this injustice.

Laurel now works at WE ACT for Environmental Justice, a community based organization in Harlem, against environmental racism which is the disproportionate unhealthy land use practices near communities of color, a product of colonialism and resulting unjust economic and political structures. In the future, Laurel plans to work on community health issues in Hawai'i, both fighting U.S.-led imperialism and working with other oppressed people to protect our health and dignity.

A Celebration of Roots and Community



On May 18th, 2007, at The Home of the National Black Theatre for Action Arts in Harlem, CAAAV celebrated 20 years of commitment to a vision for justice and self-determination. On behalf of CAAAV members, staff, and the 20th Anniversary Organizing Committee, we would like to express deep, heartfelt appreciation and thanks to all of the donors, volunteers, speakers, performers; and to all of the attendees and supporters who were with us in spirit who contributed to the success of this event. Your pledges totaled over \$25,000! But moreover, "Our Roots Grow Deep" was an evening filled with pride, joy, hope and love; it was a great reminder of what brings us together in this work to begin with.

Thank you to the honorees, speakers, performers who participated: Deepa Fernandes, Jane Sung E Bai, Aileen Payumo, Gamelan Dharma Swara, YLP's Khmer Dance Class, Vienna Teng, the Domestic Workers United Calypsonians, Korean Alliance Against the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, FIERCE!, Kim Klein, ManSec Kong, Joo-Hyun Kang, Haandi, Yi-Ya Natural, Shaheen's Restaurant and Egg Custard King.

"Sometimes when people find out I'm a founder of CAAAV, they get all reverential. As much as today's CAAAV members feel like they're standing on our shoulders, Mini, and I feel like we're standing on yours. It's the incredible organizing that you do that reflects so much respect back on all of the early members and staff. Congratulations on 'Our Roots Grow Deep.' It was such an inspiring evening to be a part of."

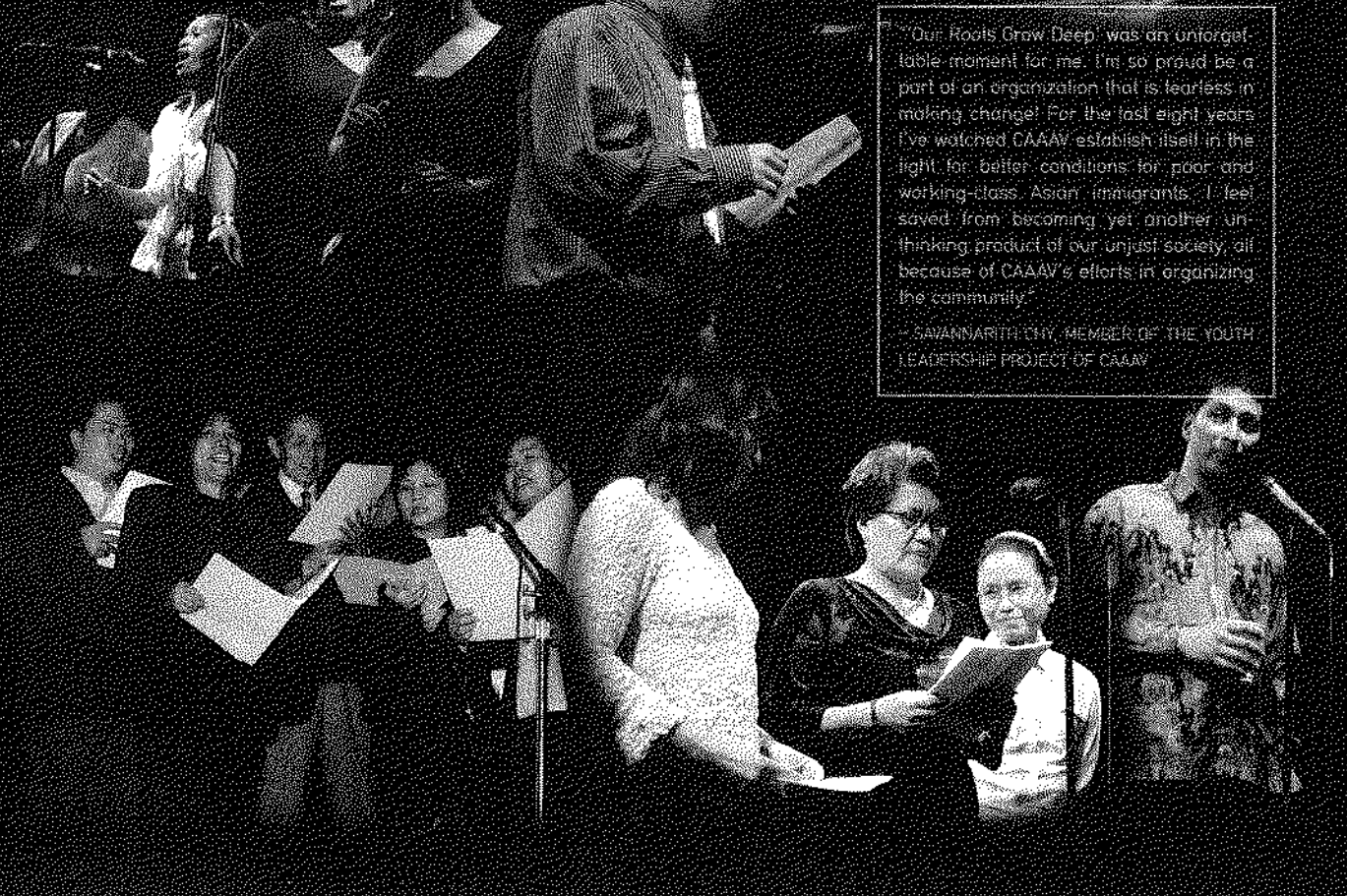
— MONONA YIN, ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF CAAAV

Mini Liu was also one of the founding members of CAAAV.



"Our Roots Grow Deep" was an unforgettable moment for me. I'm so proud to be a part of an organization that is fearless in making change! For the last eight years I've watched CAAAV establish itself in the light for better conditions for poor and working-class Asian immigrants. I feel saved from becoming yet another unthinking product of our unjust society, all because of CAAAV's efforts in organizing the community."

— SAVANNARITH CHY, MEMBER OF THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT OF CAAAV





CAAUV : ORGANIZING ASIAN COMMUNITIES

Founded in 1986, CAAUV (also known as Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence) organizes across diverse poor and working-class Asian immigrant communities in New York City to build community power to exercise self-determination and participate in a broader movement of Third World people within the U.S. and abroad, for racial and economic justice. CAAUV is a volunteer-driven organization led by members of our program areas.

CAAUV'S PROGRAM AREAS INCLUDE:

CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

Uniting low-income residents and vendors for affordable housing, preservation of public space, and an end to displacement caused by gentrification.

SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

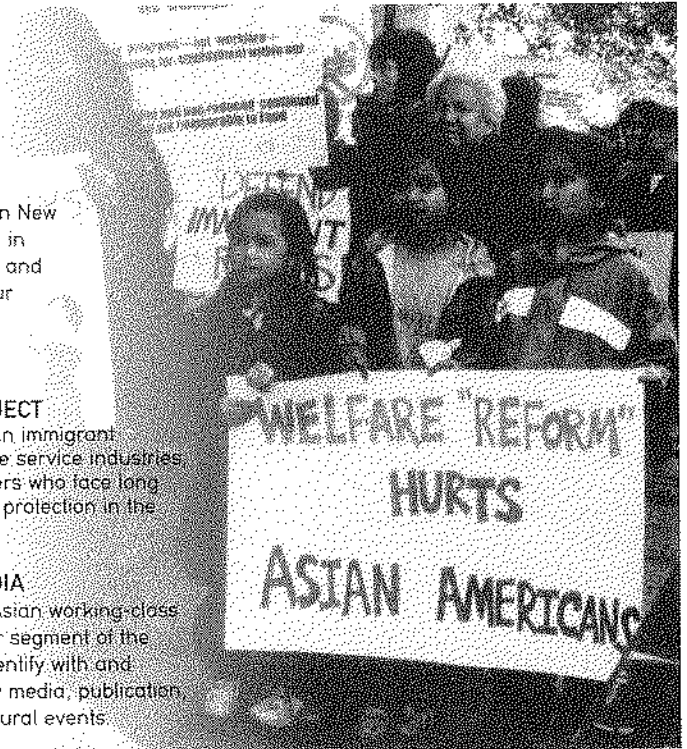
Organizing young people and adults in the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee community of the Bronx for immigrant rights and racial justice, while creating alternatives to poverty.

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT

Building power among Asian immigrant women working in low-wage service industries particularly domestic workers who face long hours, low wages and little protection in the workplace.

ASIAN RESISTANCE MEDIA

Increasing the visibility of Asian working-class struggles so that a broader segment of the community can begin to identify with and support them, through new media, publication, political education and cultural events.



VISIT THE CAAUV WEBSITE: WWW.CAAUV.ORG

CAAUV VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF CAAUV: ORGANIZING ASIAN COMMUNITIES

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