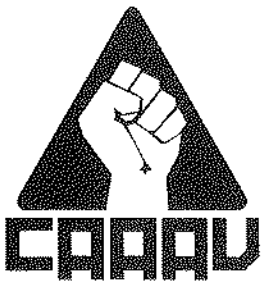


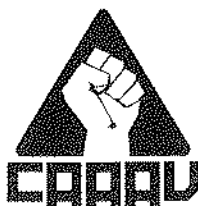
CAAUV VOICE

v14no1 . Summer 2006



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EDITOR'S NOTE

MUCH HAS HAPPENED since the last issue of the Voice was published over a year ago. Hurricane Katrina demonstrated to the world that there is a Third World within the US—something that many of us have known all along. The aftermath of Katrina brought US racism, particularly anti-Black racism in the South, into sharp focus. And now as this Voice is coming to print, Congress is working to reform immigration policy to criminalize our communities, and permanently trap Third World immigrants in a cycle of fear and exploitation. The "War on Terror" continues, instead of building levees in New Orleans, or creating living wage jobs for all, the US continues to send youth of color, including many immigrants, to fight the war in Iraq. In the wake of this devastation, new opportunities to build the movement locally and globally have opened.

This issue of the Voice begins by following CAAUV members on an international journey to the WTO protests in Hong Kong. Since the creation of the WTO ten years ago, deregulation and liberalization in trade policies and privatization have already had a dramatic impact on people's lives all over the world. Farmers and peasants in the global South are losing their livelihoods; domestic agricultural products are unable to compete with cheap foreign imports flooding their markets. Entire industries in the global South have been forced to shut down as a result of reduced tariffs and increased competition from foreign goods. This has led to mass unemployment, poverty and out-migration of workers. The US "War on Terror" has provided both the opportunity and resources for governments around the world, like the Philippines, to use military violence to stop grassroots resistance to these trade policies and the poverty they create. In the opening pages, members share their experiences and lessons from movements in Asia.

In New York City, even as the city commits billions of dollars to fund private sector development in lower Manhattan in the name of post-9/11 "rebuilding," Chinatown residents work long hours for dirt-cheap wages and struggle against forced evictions. Filipina, Indonesian, and Malaysian migrant women work as nannies and housekeepers in an industry with virtually no labor protections, while unjust immigration policies target them as "illegal" and "criminal." In the Northwest Bronx, Cambodian and Vietnamese youth, whose families were abruptly cut from welfare rolls, seek sweatshop jobs in factories throughout the tri-state area while a racist criminal justice system profiles them as "criminals." Our community organizing updates tell these stories and the fights for dignity and justice being waged in response.

Locally, this issue of the Voice focuses in on Chinatown, NYC. No longer an imminent, political threat, China is now a key player in the global economy: the newest, deepest pool of profit stolen from the largest pool of human labor. The mainstream media dehumanizes globalization in China by running countless stories on the U.S. trade deficit with China and the non-sustainability of China's economic growth. We examine the human cost of these broader economic forces right here in our City, highlighting the struggles of immigrants in Manhattan's Chinatown—street vendors who must fight for the right to work and working-class tenants who must fight for the right to stay in their own community.

We remain in a period of disaster, war, exploitation, and oppression. However, there is a world of struggle, hope and resistance—both beyond our borders and down the block—that inspires us to continue to tell the parallel and connected stories of oppressed communities, and work to build the movement.

— THE EDITORS

SUMMER 2008 CAAUV Organizing Asian Communities
VOICE MASTHEAD

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GLOBAL RESISTANCE: FROM NYC TO HONG KONG

THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) held its sixth ministerial meeting to conclude the Doha round of negotiations on trade policies in Hong Kong in December 2005. CAAAV joined thousands of migrant workers, peasants, trade unionists, environmentalists, youth and students in Hong Kong to say "No to the WTO!" Our goals were to: 1. Learn about the impact of "globalization" and the WTO in the global South, and the people's resistance movements from all over the world who oppose it; 2. Share and exchange our experiences as communities negatively impacted by globalization and opposed to the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor nations and communities; and 3. Stand together with the people of the world to say "No to the WTO!" Many of our members are migrants, displaced from our homelands as a direct result of unjust trade policies, privatization and structural adjustment programs imposed by international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In the United States, the majority in our communities face exploitation as an invisible workforce of low-wage workers that service the wealthy. The U.S. also imposes a form of "structural adjustment" on communities of color and the poor within its own borders; more interested in military spending, the U.S. increasingly fails to provide for the welfare of its people.

The theme that weaves together the many different lessons that we learned is that the struggle against the WTO and globalization needs to be waged on the home front. Ultimately, it is the local organizing

work and the building of an international alliance from this local work that will bring about a more just world. International gatherings are just one aspect of a longer-term strategy in the fight.

During People's Action Week, our people of color delegation was the largest delegation from the U.S. It is people of color communities that bear the brunt of U.S. policies. But at the anti-WTO protests in Seattle or at most of the anti-war protests here at home, people of color are often overshadowed by white activists. It was really powerful to be marching as part of a larger contingent of people of color from the U.S. with people from the third world. Being at the WTO protests together made us realize the great potential for - and importance of - building the movement here in the U.S. Those of us living in the belly of the beast need to engage the struggle against globalization in our local and national work, and connect it to the struggles being waged across the globe.

KONG YEE SAI MAU! DOWN DOWN WTO!

Protesting the Treatment of Chinese Workers 12.11.2005

On the eve of the official start of People's Action Week, a local Hong Kong organization called Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM) held a protest against Giordano, a famous Hong Kong clothing brand. They released a research report that documents the exploitation of Chinese workers at factories used and owned by Giordano. China's accession to the WTO has been

devastating to Chinese workers. SACOM wanted to call attention to how workers are hurt by the WTO and globalization. Although the protests were held in Hong Kong, workers from mainland China were unable to participate in the protests because of fear of persecution.

The People March 12.12.2005

People's Action Week officially began with a march and rally of thousands of migrant workers, farmers and allies from all over Asia who shared messages of solidarity and support for the struggle against globalization.

Large contingents from Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea, India, and Thailand filled out the march. There were also contingents from Japan, Taiwan and, of course, ours from the United States. The U.S. contingent sported a banner that read "Low-wage Immigrant Workers --- Solidarity" and chanted in English, Cantonese, Korean, and Spanish.

But—by far—the contingents from Indonesia and the Philippines dominated the march and rally. The ranks of those delegations were bolstered by the large number of migrant workers from their countries that are forced to work in Hong Kong, primarily as live-in domestic workers, because globalization policies have made it impossible for them to find jobs in their home countries. Victoria Park is one of the main gathering grounds for migrant domestic workers on their only day off during the week (Sunday). Hundreds of Indonesian and Filipina domestic workers congregate in the park and in the streets, sharing food, playing cards, listening to music and dancing. Because they have no private spaces of their own, migrant domestic workers have no choice but to claim these public spaces once a week so that they can connect with people from home.

U.S. Delegation Low-wage worker exchange 12.14.2005

The US Delegation hosted a international workers exchange in Victoria Park. Panelists from our organizations gave an overview of the conditions facing migrants in the states working in the low-wage service sector. A former factory worker organizing with the Chinese Progressive Association of San Francisco and a Latina garment worker organizer from the Garment Workers Center in Los Angeles were on the panel. Although no members from the Women Workers Project were able to travel with us to Hong Kong due to the US' immigration policies, we shared a little bit about our organizing work of Filipina, Indonesian, and Malaysian domestic workers. Many were surprised to hear about the exploitative conditions faced by immigrants in the U.S.

Hall of Shame Embassy Hopping Protest 12.15.2005

The Asian Migrants Coordinating Body, an umbrella group that

organizes Asian migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, Migrante International of the Philippines, and ILPS' Study Commission for Migrants organized a consulate hopping protest targeting the consulates of nations that exploit migrant workers. Protesters visited the Nepali, Indonesian, Malaysian, Philippine, and Thai consulates, as well as the Hong Kong Central Government Office and the U.S. Embassy. Each consulate, was issued awards of shame for their

China's accession to the WTO has been devastating to Chinese workers.

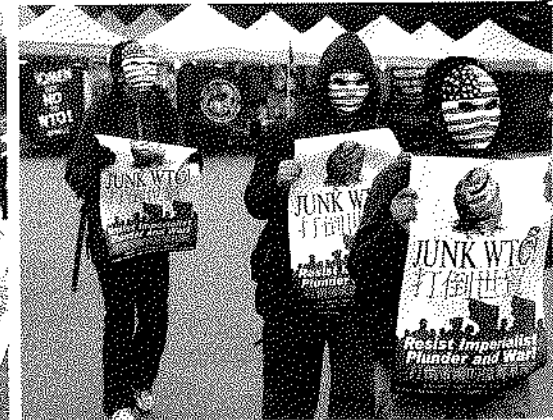
treatment of migrant workers in Hong Kong.

The protests culminated in front of the US Embassy. A "Migrants Terror" award was presented to an actor playing George W. Bush. A representative from BAYAN USA gave a rousing speech that energized the crowd, and representatives from New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco all spoke in solidarity.

Post-People's Action Week

On December 18th, People's Action week officially ended with a march and rally at the harbor across from the Convention Center. There were speeches and songs, and the scattering of rose petals for all the people impacted by the WTO. Everyone tied red ribbons to metal fences that enclosed the area to create a symbolic reminder of the week-long actions. The mood at the rally was somber as many of the over 1000 protesters who had been arrested by the police during the previous evening's protests at the Convention Center were still being detained. Eventually, all but 14 of the protesters were released; the Hong Kong 14, as they came to be called, were charged with unlawful assembly. Over the subsequent weeks, press conferences, protests, vigils, and hunger strikes were held in Hong Kong calling for the release of the detained protesters. Solidarity actions were also held across the globe in the Philippines, Korea, Europe, and here in the U.S. This international solidarity helped lead to charges being dropped against all but two of the detainees. Actions continue to be held in Hong Kong as the trials for the two Korean protesters commenced in March.

Previous page: Farmers from all over the world gather at a rally at Victoria Park in Hong Kong to Protest the WTO's policies to liberalize trade in agriculture. Below: Protestors came from all parts of the globe, including Indonesia, Korea and the United States, to denounce the economic and social devastation in the Third World caused by free-trade policies.





A MOVEMENT
OF
ALL
THE PEOPLE

In the summer of 2005, the International Solidarity Mission was conducted to document the massive human rights violations in the Philippines since the US declared it the "second front" in the US "War on Terror." The mission, held from August 14-19, sent 85 foreign delegates from 17 countries to 5 regions of the Philippines where human rights violations, committed by the current admin-

istration of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, were at their worst since martial law under Marcos. After the mission, they stayed on picket lines with striking workers, visited peasant villages facing displacement from eco-tourism, and met with local, grassroots movement organizations. Three members of CAAAV decided to go, and share the following:

THE WHITE GATES leading to the main compound of Hacienda Luisita, a sugar plantation owned and operated by the former President, Corazon Aquino's family – the Cojuanco Family, are covered with words, "Lupa" or land in Tagalog, painted in the color of blood. For the peasants and sugar mill workers who have lived and worked on the vast grounds of the sugar plantation for generations, the land is center and source of life.

We learned about the struggle of peasants who work the land, the workers who work in the sugar mills and the strong alliance between them through a series of interviews with people who lived at a picket line surrounding the white gates. They were the survivors of a massacre committed on November 16, 2004 by Philippine National Police officers, and officials belonging to the highest levels of the Philippine government, including President Arroyo to stop the workers and peasants at Hacienda Luisita from fighting for their rights to the land, higher wages and better working conditions.

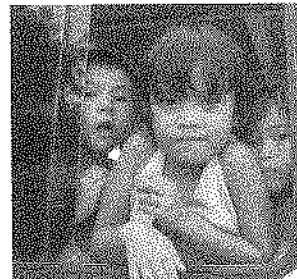
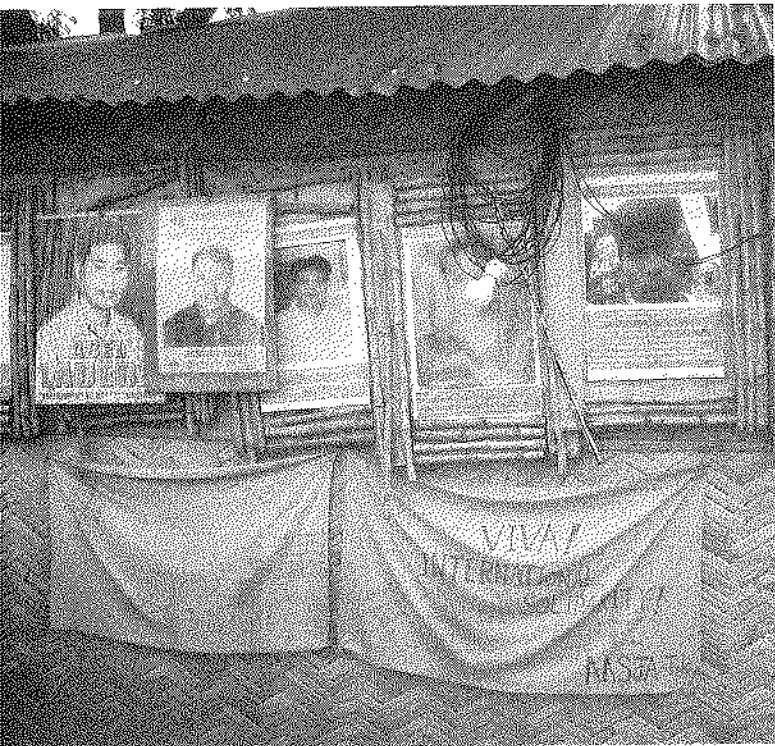
The peasants and workers explained that several years ago, under new union leadership, they began a fight for new contracts. At the time, peasants earned 9 Pesos, 50 centavos per week. The exchange rate is

approximately 50 pesos to 1 US dollar. Most peasants were only able to afford one meal per day. In addition, their rights to the land had been denied repeatedly by both the Cojuangco family and the Philippine government. As their organizing gained momentum, the Cojuangco family, who refused to negotiate a fair contract, retaliated against their leadership. On November 6, the workers went on strike. Six days later, the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines opened fire on the striking workers. At least seven were killed, dozens injured, over 100 arrested, and several women sexually assaulted by officers. The government explained the massacre by calling the strikers "members of the New People's Army."

Human Rights Violations in the Philippines and the War on Terror
Soon after September 11th President Bush declared the Philippines the "second front" of the "War on Terror." Since then, human rights organizations in the Philippines have documented over 3,560 human rights violations against activists, journalists, lawyers, clergy, peasants and workers under the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Administration. We saw the "Made in the USA" weapons and military supplies used to strike fear in the hearts of people in resistance with our own eyes. It

nizing that emerges from the communities within the United States who are most directly impacted by militarism and neo-liberalism, that exposes the impact of such policies both at home and abroad. We saw that organizers in the Philippines watch closely for news about demonstrations, or press that voices perspectives of local people against the injustice that our government supports around the world. It underscored the importance of our ongoing organizing to build the power of our communities, taking to the streets, and significantly, making the connections between what is happening inside the United States, with its global agenda.

In the Philippines, the various organizations of the national democratic movement represent all marginalized and oppressed sectors of society – from the urban poor, to queer communities, from indigenous women, to migrant workers, from mine workers, to factory workers. Each local organization grows through its own particular struggles and cultures of resistance. Yet, from their various positions, they are fundamentally connected by a common vision for national sovereignty and democracy, and a common analysis of the interests working against their vision, developed through the ongoing process of organizing



Clockwise, Victims of the Hacienda Luisita Massacre along the walls of the shanties where strikers live at the picket line. Children of strikers who live at the picket line greet international solidarity mission participants. Hacienda Luisita striker in front of the gates where the massacre occurred.



For the peasants and sugar mill workers who have lived and worked on the vast grounds of the sugar plantation for generations, the land is center and source of life.

affirmed the connections between our struggles and those of people the world over who are suffering as a result of the United States government and its foreign policy.

LESSONS IN MOVEMENT-BUILDING

The most resounding lesson of our trip this summer, was the significance of organizing from within the United States, particularly orga-

for power, deep reflection and assessment, study and more organizing. Each organization asks itself consistently, what are the conditions, what have we done well, where did we make mistakes? The lessons are shared with other organizations in the movement, so that the entire movement may be strengthened by the experience.

There is no one strong, charismatic leader; leadership is everywhere, in every organization, every barangay, every factory. Though their movement and these everyday leaders are currently under fire, they maintain their vision and their faith in the ability of the people to continue to fight. We hope that our movement in the U.S. may learn and draw strength from the dynamism, humility and vision that we observed in the Philippine organizations this summer. And we hope that as we continue to build the movement in the U.S. that we can strengthen our relationships and capacity to support the movements in Asia and throughout the global South.



CHINATOWN IS NOT FOR SALE

NEW YORK CITY'S CHINATOWN is the site of the largest concentration of Chinese in the western hemisphere. Recently, the face of Chinatown has begun to change. While the number of Chinese in the United States, including New York City, continues to grow, large-scale displacement threatens the fabric of the largest Chinese immigrant community in the United States. The endurance of Chinatown, despite a long history of anti-Chinese exclusion and government neglect, is testimony to the creativity and tenacity of generations of immigrants who have turned the neighborhood into to what it is today—a vital place that provides homes, jobs, and a sense of community for thousands of Asian immigrants. This article briefly outlines CAAAV-Chinatown Justice Project's analysis of the causes and impact of gentrification in Chinatown, and possible solutions that will protect people from displacement.

CHINATOWN: DEMOGRAPHICS

Today, Chinatown is home to over 84,000 people, the majority of whom work in low-wage restaurant and garment industries. Most work more than 12 hours a day, six days a week, with minimal worker protections, extremely low wages, and no access to healthcare.

- 22% of Chinese in New York City live below the poverty level;
- 30% earn less than \$20,000 a year;
- More than 75% of the community are immigrants;
- 63% do not speak English; and
- 42% of adults do not have a high school diploma.

In addition, more than 95% are renters, most of whom live in tenement buildings over one hundred years old. 87% of buildings surveyed in 2002 had a range of housing code violations. With rents increasing, Chinatown tenants are forced into more overcrowded and dangerous living conditions.

GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Since the mid-to-late-1990s, young professionals, no longer able to afford the high rents in neighboring SoHo and Tribeca, moved into Chinatown, and brought with them a demand for luxury services catering specifically to their tastes. Low-income immigrants in Chinatown have experienced displacement pressures in their homes and on the job. Mom-and-pop storefronts turned into stylish bars and upscale boutiques practically overnight. Commercial spaces that once housed garment shops turned into high-tech offices or posh lofts, and tenement buildings, worn down through decades of neglect, were gutted out and became luxury apartments. Central to this process is the displacement of low-income tenants and local businesses. Landlord harassment and forced evictions of immigrant tenants, as well as police abuse of local street vendors are on the rise at an alarming rate.

FORCED EVICTIONS

The first step in converting tenement buildings into luxury apartments is the removal of low-income tenants. It is often a violent process, and immigrant tenants, who have very little government protections, are extremely vulnerable to forced evictions. The most common methods that landlords employ to displace tenants include: refusal to make repairs and cutting off basic services; harassment and intimidation coupled with offers of buy-outs; and holdover proceedings in housing court.

EVICTION PROCEEDINGS IN HOUSING COURT

Landlords have the option of evicting tenants through legal proceedings in housing court. Because most of the community does not speak English, has no time to go to court, and doesn't know where to turn for help, they are extremely vulnerable to abuse. Many tenants working in low-wage jobs do not have the luxury to take off from work to fight legal battles, and are often forced in the impossible situation of having to choose between going to court to save their homes and risking their jobs, or going to work and risking a court judgment against them to hold onto their jobs.

The most common legal grounds for court-ordered evictions are non-primary residence and illegal subletting. Low-wage work-

ers forced to travel out of state to look for work are often cited with non-primary residence, a violation of New York State housing rules, which require lease-holders to live in their apartments for 183 days (half) of the year. Living with extended families is a common practice among Chinese immigrants. But housing courts, which only recognize western cultural norms, do not include people beyond the immediate nuclear family in the definition of who constitutes a "family." Thus, those who move their extended families into their apartments are often accused of illegal subletting and are also vulnerable to eviction.

After landlords successfully vacate an apartment, they renovate the unit and rent it out to young professionals, eager to pay double or triple the rent. These rent increases are often illegal, but the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, charged with enforcing rent laws, does nothing to provide oversight and penalize landlords who willfully overcharge. Once the rents go up, they never come down, and thus will never again be affordable for Chinatown's low-wage workers, who desperately need adequate housing. In this way, Chinatown, just like the rest of New York City, is permanently losing thousands of low-income housing stock everyday.

As landlords convert tenement buildings into luxury housing, they are also remaking Chinatown's public space to accommodate the young professional residents.

Immigrant tenants often endure these harsh conditions with nowhere to turn. Mayor Bloomberg's 311 hotline, the city's central service for citizen complaints and questions, does not provide adequate services to immigrant tenants who do not speak English and The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the city agency responsible for housing code enforcement, also fails to provide language access for immigrant tenants. While close to 50,000 immigrants require HPD services in Chinatown alone, HPD only employs sixteen Chinese-speaking inspectors for all five boroughs of New York City. Even if tenants are able to make a housing complaint, HPD does not connect inspectors to tenants who speak the same language. Despite this, HPD refused the community's repeated requests for bilingual inspectors last year, and continues to turn a blind eye to immigrants who need HPD's protection from aggressive landlords who flout the law.



ROOT CAUSES

Four main factors contribute to the looming problem of large-scale displacement in Chinatown:

- New York City's transformation into a global financial center
- Government facilitation of gentrification
- Neglect of Chinatown's low-wage workers in New York City's post-September 11 "Rebuilding" priorities
- China's economic reform

New York City's Transformation into a Global Financial Center

De-industrialization and flight of manufacturing in the past three decades have forced First World cities to reorganize their economies. While New York City boasted 1 million manufacturing jobs in 1950, only 387,000 remained in 1987. Young professionals flocked to the city to fill high-tech jobs in the finance center, and increased the demand for luxury housing and services. Not only does this process displace individual people, it destroys communities—their history, lifestyles, and culture. Such large-scale displacement has already torn apart Harlem, the Lower East Side, Williamsburg, and Bed-Stuy.

Government Facilitation of Gentrification

Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997—Deregulation of Tenant Protections

In 1997, New York State legislators—Democrats and Republicans alike—made major changes to New York State housing laws to facilitate the deregulation of rent laws and loosen tenant protections. Specifically, they:

- Granted landlords 20% vacancy allowances—rent increase after a tenant has vacated an apartment—thereby creating incentives for landlords to evict existing tenants;
- Reaffirmed "luxury decontrol"—deregulating vacant apartments renting for more than \$2,000 a month—thereby boosting incentives for landlords to evict existing tenants and raise rents (often illegally) to \$2000;
- Required tenants to pay "mandatory rent deposits"—rent into escrow during Housing Court disputes—thereby denying tenants due process of law by forcing them to pay for the right to have a trial in Housing Court; and
- Removed nephews, nieces, aunts and uncles from the list of "traditional family members"—those who can legally live in an apartment with the lease-holder and have the right to inherit a lease in their name after the lease-holder vacates the apartment—thereby

making it harder for renters living with extended family members (most immigrants and people of color) to stay together or transfer leases to each other.

These laws, coupled with the lack of enforcement of tenant protections, make it easy—and in fact, create incentives—for landlords to displace low-income tenants and convert vacant units into luxury housing.

New York City's Post-September 11 "Rebuild" Priorities

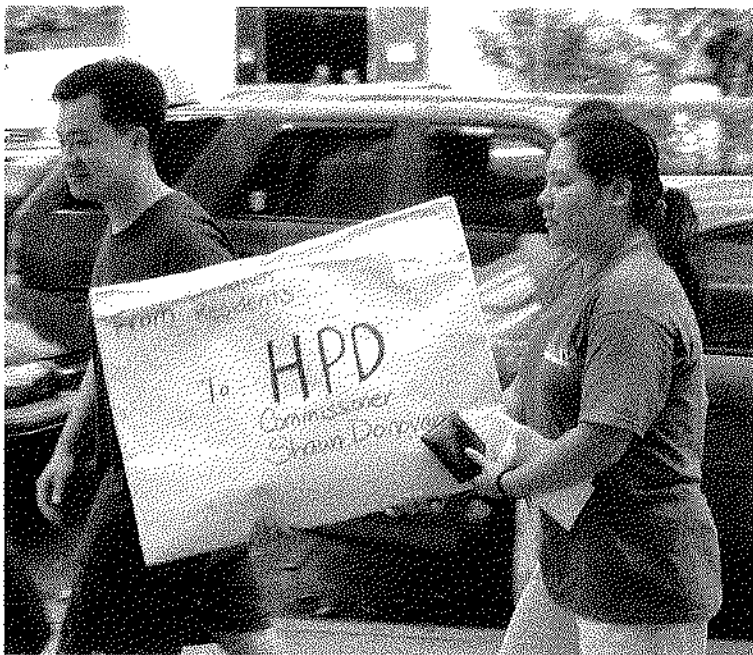
Neglect of Chinatown's Low-wage Workers

The September 11 attacks had a devastating impact on Chinatown. One-fourth of Chinatown's garment factories closed, Chinatown's business revenues declined 20 percent, and 25,000 Chinatown workers lost jobs.

Despite this, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), charged with directing post-September 11 rebuilding efforts, has completely ignored the needs of low-wage workers in Chinatown while pouring millions of dollars into the finance and real estate industries. Rather than providing much-needed low-income housing, the LMDC's disbursement of Residential Grant Program funds has paradoxically contributed to an increase of market rate housing in Lower Manhattan, and Liberty Bonds, public subsidies for developers, are being used to finance thousands of new luxury rental units.

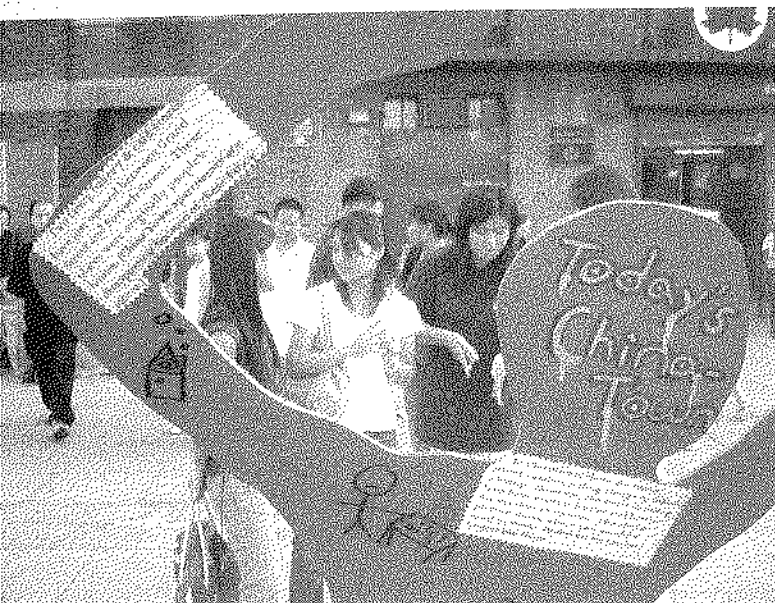
A slew of post-9/11 re-development projects in the pipeline for Chinatown threaten to exacerbate the already urgent problem of displacement. To rescue Chinatown's economy from the devastating impact of September 11, developers and community leaders seek to turn the community into a center for tourism and commerce. The preservation of the neighborhood as an affordable home to working-class Chinese immigrants is only a secondary concern, if at all.

Although Chinatown community groups have recently joined the public debate on downtown rebuilding priorities and are rightfully calling for more equity and transparency in LMDC's disbursement of funds, they, too, are complicit in ignoring the needs of the most vulnerable sectors of the community. For example, existing proposals make a long list of recommendations aimed at boosting commerce and tourism in Chinatown—zoning changes to facilitate the construction of a "Pacific Rim" office district, the construction of a transportation hub at Chatham Square, an East River waterfront development, and the construction of a Lincoln Square-inspired cultural center, to name a few. Business and civic leaders, who contend that what's good for business is good for the community, praise these recommendations. However, without putting in place strong protections for low-wage



Many tenants working in low-wage jobs do not have the luxury to take off from work to fight legal battles, and are often forced in the impossible situation of having to choose between going to court to save their homes and risking their jobs, or going to work and risking a court judgment against them to hold onto their jobs.

Right to Rent is a Chinatown Justice Project held a rally in front of the Housing and Preservation Department of New York City prior to drawing a court injunction filed with prosecutors from Chinatown residents demanding bilingual housing services.



workers, low-income tenants, and small businesses—already threatened with imminent displacement—large-scale development in Chinatown will only raise property values, which will in turn intensify displacement pressures, leaving one to question whose interests these new developments will serve.

China's Economic Reform

Between 2003 and 2004, U.S. exports to China increased 36 percent, making China one of the fastest-growing U.S. export markets, and the sixth-largest U.S. export market overall. China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the liberalization of its economy have sparked a race among U.S. corporations eager to tap into China's vast market and workforce.

Increasingly, U.S. investors look to New York's Chinatown as a potential broker that can facilitate trade and provide valuable information services to U.S.-based companies seeking to turn a profit in China. These expectations have influenced planning discussions on Chinatown's future and have generated proposals designed to transform the neighborhood from a residential community to a tourism and financial district. These designs ignore the important fact that Chinatown is a community built by generations of new immigrants and low-wage workers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chinatown's workers perform the most basic jobs necessary to sustain New York City: preparing and delivering food, manufacturing clothes, constructing houses, providing fresh fish and produce, providing home healthcare. Yet they remain invisible and endure long hours, substandard wages, and harsh working conditions, and are treated as second-class citizens with no access to adequate housing or healthcare, nor language access for even the most basic government service, such as registering a complaint at the city hotline.

The primary form of tenant displacement in Chinatown is luxury conversions of tenement buildings. The following recommendations are designed to intervene at every step of the conversion process and create disincentives for developers to displace low-income tenants.

Mortgage Lending Institution Accountability (Discourage speculation by including an anti-displacement clause in mortgage lending contracts)

Increase Agency Protection of Chinatown Tenants

- Protect immigrant tenants from landlords who cut off basic services as a form of harassment and constructive eviction

- Hire bilingual operators at the City's 311 hotline and bilingual housing inspectors for immigrant tenants who seek restoration of services

Expand the Definition of "Traditional Family"

- Protect immigrant tenants in non-traditional living arrangements (living with extended family or people from the same village) from holdover proceedings based on "illegal subletting"—the most prevalent legal basis for evictions in Chinatown
- Change housing codes to include immigrant tenants in non-traditional living arrangements in the category of people with succession rights

Change Housing Codes to Protect Migrant Workers

- Protect immigrant low-wage workers forced to travel out of state for work from holdover proceedings based on "non-primary residence"—the second most prevalent legal basis for evictions in Chinatown

Conversion Permit Caveat

- Require landlords to prove "no forced eviction" before obtaining Buildings Department permits for luxury conversions
- Include an anti-displacement clause in Department of Buildings requirements for permits

Challenge Illegal Rents

- Discourage illegal rent increases by toughening enforcement of existing laws
- Create a special task force at the Division of Housing and Community Renewal to scrutinize rent increases in neighborhoods undergoing gentrification

Chinatown is often the only source of strength and comfort for Chinese immigrants who otherwise face a hostile environment so far away from home. The Chinatown Justice Project of CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities believes it is imperative to recognize the right of Chinatown's residents to safeguard the community as a safe place for low-income people to live and work for generations to come.

Above: Members of the Chinatown Justice Project displayed an art exhibit depicting the struggles of Chinese immigrants trying to earn a living and find decent housing. The exhibit drew the interest of Chinatown residents who have seen their housing conditions deteriorate even as neighboring buildings are gut-renovated and rented out to wealthy young professionals

¹ Sassen. ² New York City Metropolitan Council on Housing. ³ Asian American Federation of New York. ⁴ Good Jobs New York.

⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce. *Commerce News*.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

MEMBERSHIP AND COALITION BUILDING

This year, the Youth Leadership Project completed their tenth annual Summer Institute where 8 new youth members learned about the social justice movement and the history of Asian immigrant struggles. As the newest batch of organizers, they honed their skills while educating their peers from the Vietnamese and Cambodian community on deportation, detention and immigrant rights generally. YLP also concluded the Summer Institute with a 10-year anniversary community event to recognize past struggles and celebrate the resiliency of the Southeast Asian community in the Bronx. In 2005, they will increase membership and expand community involvement in anti-deportation work, by collaborating with the local Buddhist temple to expand the base of community support and provide a space from which the area residents can learn about and become involved with ongoing campaigns. YLP also held a number of holiday and cultural events to recognize the past struggles and to celebrate the resiliency of the Southeast Asian community in the Bronx.

YLP continues to strengthen relationships

with local partners and national institutions. They are working with the Southeast Asian Freedom Network, a national coalition of Southeast Asian national, legal, and community organizations focused on advocacy, legal research, and legislation to protect those facing deportation.

ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING CAMPAIGN

Following the rise in xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment after 9/11, the U.S. and Cambodia secretly signed a Repatriation Agreement in March 2002 which allowed the forced deportation of refugees back to Cambodia. This unjust policy affects Cambodian refugees with convicted felony records and has been applied retroactively to those who have already carried out their sentences. It also expands the list of deportable offenses to minor violations such as shoplifting, DWI, and writing bad checks. To date, over 200 people across the country have been deported, separating many primary wage earners from their families.

In response, YLP is mobilizing its members and linking local residents to a national effort to raise awareness and to propose alternatives to this draconian and racist policy. YLP members are collaborating with local organizations including Northern Manhattan Immigrant Rights Coalition, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, and the Bronx Defenders to push for the implementation of different procedures that will prevent deportation of newly convicted

individuals. They are pushing the District Attorney's office to create alternate practices that will take immigration status into consideration and will allow individuals to receive sentences that do not render them deportable. Additionally, YLP organizers are advocating for a shift in the youthful offender sentences, setting the cut off age at 17 years.

NATURALIZATION CAMPAIGN

In order to further protect the rights of this predominantly refugee community, YLP launched a campaign to raise community awareness about naturalized citizenship. They are currently working with lawyers and legal advocates to both assist in the naturalization process of green-card holding refugees, and draw attention to the sensitivities involved in counseling individuals who have past criminal convictions and who may be at risk of deportation. In 2006, YLP organizers will be conducting a survey on the needs of local residents and will provide case management so that they are better informed about their options.

COLLABORATION SURVEY

Through learning about the international Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign, the impact of Agent Orange on Southeast Asians (mostly Vietnamese) in Southeast Asia and the common health conditions Southeast Asians endure here in the U.S., YLP began to look at our communities' health problems in a new light. Not only are people living and working without health insurance, but when they are able to seek medical attention they are almost always underserved. And the services are not addressing the particular problems of war survivors who have been exposed to chemical warfare. Whether it's lack of translation or lack of knowledge by health professionals of SEA-specific illnesses, the SEA community in the Bronx has never seen any program tailored to their needs. The U.S. has dismantled many programs in the past 10 years that primarily served people of color in this country. YLP is currently working with the other institutions in the Southeast Asian community to develop and implement a survey to understand the health problems and needs of the community. This project seeks to hold institutions which are meant to serve the SEA community accountable, while allowing us to support each other's work and build collaborative campaigns.





CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

The fight against gentrification cannot be won without the voices of those tenants who are most impacted and without addressing their most immediate needs. In CJP we realized we needed to be able to win concrete gains that have a direct impact on tenants' lives and create a structure where tenants can have a voice to talk about how they are affected by gentrification and what they can do about it.

On February 5th, 2006, CJP and over 100 tenants and community members celebrated the one year anniversary of the formation of the Chinatown Tenant Union. The CTU currently has over 50 members and 700 supporters. We have established regular monthly meetings, a newsletter, and office hours when members can drop in. Additionally, we have been providing organizing support for tenants in three buildings this past year.

Momentum around the Chinatown Tenant Union grows as CJP and the CTU are now working in a city-wide coalition to pass language access legislation at the City Council level for language access

which includes a demand for bilingual inspectors at the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

The majority of high-income Chinatown tenants live in rent stabilized buildings that are often poorly maintained. In fact, landlords often use tactics such as refusing to make repairs or deliberately not providing basic services such as heat or hot water as a way to force low-income tenants out. More Chinese bilingual inspectors will help tenants hold their landlords accountable and will thus help preserve the rent stabilized buildings that are the main source of affordable housing in the community.

We continue to experiment and fine-tune our outreach strategies, always striving to be accountable and effective as we grow a base of tenants who can fight back. CJP now has four tenant interns who are the backbone of the organizing work as well as the leadership around the campaign. As we work towards 2007, our challenge will be on how to develop and transfer leadership of CJP and the Chinatown Tenant Union into the hands of members.

A Chinatown Justice Project member assembles an art exhibit depicting the horrible housing conditions many Chinatown residents have to endure. The art exhibit, which was displayed in Roosevelt Park in New York City's Chinatown, drew attention to the plight of Chinatown's low-income residents, many of whom are in danger of being displaced by gentrification.

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT

Kalayaan Women Workers Project [WWP] in Queens organizes Asian immigrant women working in New York's growing low-wage service sectors, particularly domestic work. In 2005, WWP launched the Community Legalization Campaign [CLC], which focuses on fighting for a broad legalization of undocumented immigrants, because we believe that no human being is illegal, and everyone has a right to live and work in peace where they are. Current U.S. immigration laws keep the over 11 million undocumented people living and working in a state of fear. The WWP fight for legalization led to a partnership with Queens-based, *Deeds Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)* that organizes South Asian deportees and their families. WWP and DRUM are currently surveying 500 Asian immigrants about how they are affected by current immigration policies and practices. The information from the survey will be published in a report exposing the deep danger immigration policy and enforcement poses for our community. This work is helping to lay a foundation for the participation of Asian communities in the broad, mass-based immigrant rights movement that is developing in response to the new proposals in Congress.

On Dec. 16, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass the "Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Act" or HR 4437. The bill contains hundreds of unworkable laws that would terrorize over 11 million immigrants, criminalize entire communities and people connected to immigrant communities, create new forms of surveillance and dangerous enforcement measures. As the Voice goes to print, the Senate Judiciary Committee (which is responsible for making immigration bills) will discuss immigration reform and will not limit itself to responding to H.R. 4437. Other proposals for guest worker legislation and border control are on the table. (For recent updates and action alerts, contact the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights: www.)

nnitr.org)

The threats that these proposals pose are clear. This is a critical moment in the on-going struggle for real immigration reform. The fact that these provisions have been introduced, whether or not they make it into the final legislation, is a dangerous sign of the direction our immigration policy is headed towards. Historically, policies have been passed without input from immigrant communities and have primarily served the interests of employers who seek to hire immigrant labor. The current proposals potentially entrench our communities in permanent underclass, criminal and disposable status.

However, along with potential threats, there are enormous opportunities to build the social justice movement in the U.S. Nationally, literally millions of immigrants and their supporters have expressed resistance in the streets of every major city in the United States.

In October of 2005, WWP joined over 20 immigrant community organizations who are working together through Immigrant Communities In Action (ICA) to build the power of diverse immigrant communities at the grassroots level to drive back the attack on immigrants in New York and around the country, joining the calls for congress to pass genuine "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" that includes the following:

1. Legalization for individual workers and families who are actively contributing to our country and a path to legalization for future flows. No guest-worker program of work & leave that has no path to legal status;
2. Improved and faster family reunification opportunities for all;
3. Enforce the protection of human and civil rights by reducing detention & deportation, ending collaboration between the DHS and public agencies, and ending deaths & abuses of migrants at the border;
4. Non-compliance with REAL ID Act by New York State and the guarantee of equal access to driver's licenses for immigrants;
5. Equal protection of labor rights of undocumented workers.

ICA has been working in coalition with a broader network of organizations including unions, churches and service organizations to help organize and support the powerful mass actions that have taken back the streets of New York time and again since March, for the people. WWP is also working with the other program areas of CAAAV to spark dialogue



among Asian service providers, advocacy and organizing groups about how we can work together to protect Asian immigrant communities in New York, as well as promoting broader movement dialogue about what this moment in history means for communities of color, particularly between immigrant organizations and groups who have historically played a critical role in building the social justice movement, particularly African American organizations.

JUSTICE FOR EXPLOITED DOMESTIC WORKERS—UPDATE ON CASES

- W was paid below minimum wage to clean and watch over a man who required special medical attention. When W requested a day off from her employer, she was denied. She learned of WWP through a graduate of the Asian Women's Leadership Institute, now Asian Women Organizer's Institute (AWOI) and decided to seek help. WWP helped W secure legal representation and has been supporting W's demand for justice since 2003, and as of May 2006, we are nearing a victory.
- For three years "Nina" worked fourteen hours a day, six days a week, for \$2 an hour, without overtime pay. She was brought to the U.S. by a high-ranking Deutsche Bank executive in 2000. In July of 2004, we teamed up with NYU Immigrant Rights Clinic to file a formal complaint against her employer. When Nina's employers were served, they fled to their home country of Australia and tried to negotiate a settlement through their lawyers. In August 2005, WWP sent a letter to the Deutsche Bank to expose these labor violations. The letter

demanded that they agree to inform all of their employees of the importance of adhering to US labor laws while in the US. The letter also demanded respect and dignity for domestic workers. After over a year of advocacy, her employers settled the case and we closed Nina's case with a victory.

- B worked as an elderly caregiver and was not paid for the last six weeks of her round-the-clock work. She has struggled for several years to receive the wages owed for her past work. WWP assisted in filing a complaint in State Court for her wages, and won her case last summer.

CURRENT AND UPCOMING PROJECTS

- The Asian Women's Leadership Institute is a four-week program covering organizing skills, the history of immigrant worker organizing in the U.S., changes in the global economy, and labor and immigration rights. The course provides a space for Asian women workers to share knowledge, experiences and gain a deeper understanding of the context for our organizing.

Members of the Women Workers Project march with other members of Domestic Workers United to demand a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights that would guarantee a living wage and prevent various forms of exploitation and abuse that domestic workers commonly endure. Domestic Workers United is a multi-national, multi-ethnic organization of domestic workers fighting for dignity, respect and recognition in the workplace. The Women Workers Project was one of founding organization behind DWU.

ASIAN RESISTANCE MEDIA (ARM)

Curry, Community & Politics

On November 10, 2005, members of ARM brought together over 40 of their friends, family, and co-workers in Chinatown for ARM's fall fund raiser, *Curry, Community, and Politics*. There, a mix of CAAAV members and individual donors met and mingled over curry and wine, listened to a presentation on CAAAV's 19 year history and also CJP, WWP, and YLP's current campaigns, and heard long-time CAAAV supporter and friend, Becky Lee, give a moving speech on the importance of supporting community-based organizations and why she donates to CAAAV. *Curry, Community, and Politics* marked a new milestone for ARM and its efforts towards helping to build CAAAV's grassroots fund raising for the organization's long-term sustainability and growth.

Founded in 2000, Asian Resistance Media, or ARM, works to build popular support and develop resources for Asian community organizing in NYC through cultural events, new media, fund raising, and publication. ARM strategically raises consciousness amongst the broader Asian community and serves as a vehicle for their participation in a movement for racial and economic justice led by those most affected.

Celebrating 20 Years of Building Grassroots Power

Today, ARM has grown into a vibrant and dynamic collective of fifteen members meeting monthly and coordinating projects to advance CAAAV's work. In 2006, ARM members will work to amplify the struggles and community organizing efforts of CAAAV's three community-based program areas through the publication of the *CAAAV VOICE* and will build the capacity of CAAAV through continued work with program areas and particularly through its coordination of CAAAV's 20th Anniversary Celebration.

To learn more about ARM send an email to justice@caav.org.



STAFF UPDATES

Yvonne Lee, Director of the Chinatown Justice Project, has left her position after more than 10 years on staff. Yvonne has many invaluable contributions, including organizing around issues of racial justice, participating in city-wide campaigns on behalf of Downtown residents, leading the Chinatown Justice Project, training youth to organize tenants, and helping CAAAV to develop an understanding of how jurisdiction is threatened for the future of one of the oldest, largest Asian communities in New York City. She has helped lead CAAAV through many stages of transition and development, contributing her deep rootedness in working class struggles, methodical work, determined organization, clear facilitation skills, humility, account-

ability and commitment to movement building to our growth as an organization. She remains a member of CAAAV, serving the organization in different capacities, including our Strategic Committee. Yvonne works in a private law school and was the past chair of the National Bar Exam Development. We thank her for the time, creative energy, dedication, and love she has always and continues to give to the organization.

CAAAV welcomes our newest staff member, Marie, to a new position since 2004, the Development Coordinator position to oversee the development and implementation of CAAAV's fundraising strategy. From its founding staff, Marie served as the National Coordinator of Peace Justice 381 People of Color Against the War. Marie will also be coordinating Asian Resistance Media.

CAAAV MEDIA

New CAAAV Media available NOW!



DOMESTIC WORKERS UNITED BUTTONS

2004, 2 designs

Purchase of these buttons helps support DWU's work.

\$3 each or 2 for \$5



CHINATOWN IS NOT FOR SALE VIDEO

2002, 43 minutes
Documentary by the
Chinatown Justice Project

A video about Manhattan's Chinatown community struggle against gentrification and displacement. This video examines the impact of racist real estate practices in Chinatown and how low income Chinese tenants are displaced to "make room" for young white professionals. The film also includes footage of CJP's efforts to combat this displacement. Chinatown is Not For Sale!! was directed and produced by Youth Organizers of the Chinatown Justice Project of CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities.

\$150 Institutional, \$50 Low Income



EATING WELFARE VIDEO

2000, 58 minutes
Documentary by the
Youth Leadership Project

This film challenges the success of welfare programs by exposing the way in which more than 500,000 families in New York City were pushed off the welfare rolls in the 1990s. Eating Welfare traces the journey of Southeast Asian refugees from war-torn Vietnam and Cambodia to the Bronx and examines the impact of federal welfare reform measures on them after their arrival.

\$150 Institutional, \$50 Low Income



CAAAV 15th ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRT

S, M, L, XL, baby tees
Design shown left

100% white cotton T-shirts with black design feature the image used for CAAAV's 15th Anniversary celebration in 2001.

\$10 Regular, \$15 Baby Tee



CAAAV

Check our website for regular updates on our program areas and upcoming events

ABOUT



ORGANIZING
ASIAN
COMMUNITIES

Founded in 1986, CAAAV (also known as Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence) organizes across diverse poor and working-class Asian immigrant communities in New York City to build grassroots community power to exercise self-determination and participate in a broader movement of Third World people within the US and abroad, for racial and economic justice.

CAAAV'S PROGRAM AREAS INCLUDE:

CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT
uniting low-income residents and vendors for decent and affordable housing and an end to displacement caused by gentrification.

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.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT
Organizes young people and adults in the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee community of the Bronx for racial, economic and education justice.

ASIAN RESISTANCE MEDIA
lifting up the struggles of the Asian poor and working-class through publication, the web, events and education, so that more people can understand, identify, support and join the movement.

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CHINATOWN JUSTICE PROJECT

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

WOMEN WORKERS PROJECT

ASIAN RESISTANCE MEDIA

Celebrating 20 years of Community Organizing!

For all the latest news about CAAAV's campaigns, events, and upcoming 20th Anniversary Celebration, subscribe to CAAAV's new listserve by sending an email to:

community-subscribe@caaav.org
(if you don't receive a confirmation email in your inbox, pls check your bulk mail or spam folder)

CAAAY Organizing Asian Communities
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CAAAY VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF CAAAY. ORGANIZING ASIAN COMMUNITIES

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