



OCCA NEWSLETTER June 30, 2019

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2019 OCCA/OCCS Summer Picnic

by Nancy Song

On Saturday, June 22, 2019, OCCA held its annual summer picnic at the Mary H. Harriman Memorial Park in Harriman, New York. The event was co-sponsored by ECARD Inc. As with every year, this picnic was filled with lots of food, fun, and catching up for many people who had not seen each other for some time. Mr. Gary Zhang graciously contributed nearly 100 pounds of lamb meat, shrimp, and chicken wings to the picnic, the cost of which was compensated by OCCA. Thanks to the many volunteers who helped prepare the lamb and vegetable shish kebabs, there was constantly food on the grill for anyone to grab and eat. Meanwhile, several students set up a volleyball net in the adjacent field. Much effort was spent ensuring that the picnic would be entertaining for everyone.

(cont. on page 2)



橙郡中文学校首届汉字拼写比赛: On Saturday, June 8, 2019, OCCS held its first annual Chinese Spelling Bee. Full article on page 3.



Participants from Orange, Rockland, and Bergen counties, along with Senator Skoufis and Attorney Hu in the front-center.

Ping-Pong and Priceless Company at The OCCA Zhiyu Cup Tournament

By Katie Luo

On Saturday morning, June 15th, 2019, approximately 50 Chinese-American members of the community gathered at the Central Valley Elementary School gymnasium. While it was normal for the school to be filled with Chinese-studying students and volunteering parents every Saturday, these attendants had a different, special purpose: to test their mettle, add their paddles to the chorale of bouncing ping-pong balls, and face off beneath the orange glow of gymnasium lights. The Orange County Chinese Association (OCCA) 2019 Zhiyu Cup, sponsored by attorney Zhiyu Hu, saw players from New York and New Jersey's Orange, Rockland, and Bergen counties team up and battle for the championship. Thanks to organizer and OCCA President Kangjian Wu, it was the second ping-pong tournament ever to happen at Central Valley Elementary. The game was one of many events this year to be hosted by the OCCA, whose mission is to promote Chinese culture and heritage in Orange County through educational, social, and other local programs.

(cont. on page 4)

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UPCOMING EVENTS
JUL/AUG 2019

1. SUMMER OUTING IN JONES BEACH, NY ON SATURDAY, JULY 13 @ 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
2. SUMMER CAMPING IN HAMMONASSET BEACH STATE PARK, CT ON AUGUST 9 – 11
3. CULTURAL OUTREACH DURING NEW WINDSOR COMMUNITY DAY ON AUGUST 24

(cont. from page 1 – “Summer Picnic”)

After most people had eaten their fill of homemade dishes and barbecue, OCCA President Mr. Kangjian Wu began the Community Recognition Awards Ceremony. OCCA Adviser Mr. Qingping Jiang and OCCA Board Member Mr. Chenghua Deng were both awarded plaques for their outstanding contribution to the community. Former OCCA Board Member Mr. Bin Yi was also awarded a plaque for his service in the Board from 2015-2019. Students who received awards included winners from the first Chinese Spelling Bee at OCCS and the 5 children whose artwork was featured in the First International Painting Exhibition. A representative from ECARD Inc. was given an opportunity to speak about the benefits of ECARD, a reloadable prepaid card that is accepted worldwide. Afterwards, Mr. Eugene Yu treated everyone with a solo guitar and vocal performance that was met with much enthusiastic applause.

Throughout the picnic, people of all ages were engaged in fun games and activities. At one table, several adults excitedly played through multiple rounds of Chinese poker. On the other end of the pavilion, children were given face and body paintings, as well as temporary tattoos. Children naturally flocked to the playground to play with one another. Other students played soccer, volleyball, frisbee, and tug of war together to test their strength and endurance. When those activities became tiring, the nearby creek was the next best option for those wishing to explore the local surroundings.

As the afternoon began to wind down, everyone began working together to clean up the pavilion and park area by sweeping the place and picking up stray pieces of trash. Since 150 people had attended the picnic, at one point all of the cups had run out and some people had resorted to drinking from paper plates. One observant OCCA member momentarily left and returned with brand new cups he had just purchased, making everyone's life a bit more convenient. Even though it had been rainy in the days leading up to the weekend, the weather on the day of the picnic was perfect: mostly sunny with a light breeze. Overall, the OCCA summer picnic was yet another wonderful event that celebrated the end of the academic year and brought together many families and visitors from outside Orange County.



First Chinese Spelling Bee at OCCS is a Success

by Angela Qiu



There are over one billion Mandarin Chinese speakers in the world – but how many of them can write down the correct characters in a dictation test? In a digital age where most Chinese rely heavily on input tools and predictive text on their smartphones and computers to type pinyin, the official romanization system for the pronunciation of Mandarin Chinese, many experienced speakers find themselves unable to handwrite various Chinese characters from memory – a troubling phenomenon known as “character amnesia”. To challenge its Chinese language students and enforce general curriculum learning outcomes, the Orange County Chinese Association (OCCA) held its first annual Chinese Spelling Bee competition on Saturday, June 8th, 2019, with the support of the newly-formed OCCS Student Government Association (SGA), OCCS faculty member Ms. Qian He, OCCA President Mr. Kangjian Wu, and OCCS Principal Mr. Kenneth Chan. The event was inspired by typical spelling bees in the U.S. where spellers are asked to spell English words of various languages of origin, such as French, German, Latin, and Greek.

The Chinese Spelling Bee began at 9:30 AM at Central Valley Elementary School with nearly all OCCS students participating in the dictation test. Members of the SGA helped with preparations for the spelling bee by decorating the large cafeteria with posters and distributing unique number tags to all spellers. OCCS faculty member Ms. Na Li served as the pronouncer due to her upbringing in Beijing, where people are known for their incredibly accurate Beijing dialect and Standard Chinese pronunciation. After SGA President Angela Qiu read aloud the rules of the competition, OCCS Principal Mr. Chan announced the name of the next speller to compete based on the number the three judges Ms. Jingyi Tan, Mr Hongyin Wu, and Mr. Zhenghui Li, randomly chose. The teamwork and cooperation of these OCCA members ensured that the spelling bee ran smoothly and successfully.

The spellers at the OCCS Chinese Spelling Bee were divided into 2 groups based on their classes: Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) Level I & Level II.

The HSK Level I group consisting of 25 students was tested first. Upon hearing their number called out, the spellers approached an ELMO projector and wrote the Chinese character(s) given by the announcer, which would then be displayed for the judges to see. All of the spellers were well-behaved and showed their support for their fellow classmates by applauding every speller who had tried their best. The HSK Level I spelling bee concluded with sisters Emma and Gabby Deleon coming in 1st and 2nd place, respectively, and Darren Zhang coming in 3rd place. Both sisters had only started learning Chinese one year prior to the competition, making their victory even more remarkable. In the much smaller HSK Level II group of 7 spellers, only 2 winners were awarded: Fujian natives and sisters Iris and Fiona Chen came in 1st and 2nd place, respectively. All winners received their prizes during the Community Recognition Awards Ceremony at the OCCA/OCCS 2019 Summer Picnic on Saturday, June 22nd, 2019.

Through this inaugural Chinese Spelling Bee, OCCS succeeded in bringing awareness to the importance of the written Chinese language that many are slowly forgetting as there are fewer and fewer opportunities to handwrite Chinese. This event would not have been possible without the efforts of the OCCS students, who dedicated their time to practice writing 150 Chinese characters during class and outside of school; OCCS faculty, who helped organize the event and encourage students to participate; and proud parents who offered their children nothing short of love and support throughout the competition. It is hoped that more Chinese schools around the world will be encouraged to hold their own written spelling bees to promote the art and long history of Chinese writing.

For more resources on learning Mandarin Chinese, please check the OCCA website (www.occany.org) for OCCS curriculum guidelines and vocabulary lists, which range from 500 common Chinese characters to 3,500 Chinese characters required for fluency.



(cont. from page 1 – “Ping-Pong and Priceless Company”)

There was an easy camaraderie between teammates and opponents as they watched their peers play or waited for their next matchup. Applause followed every clean shot and score, and players were never without a smile; the morale and sense of sportsmanship was high. The first pair of energetic and much-cheered players were none other than attorney Hu himself and Senator James Skoufis. Senator Skoufis, a Monroe-Woodbury alumnus, gave a valiant effort in defeating Hu but was bested in the end.

Senator Skoufis has been part of the OCCA community for a long time. An attendant of OCCA Lunar Year Celebrations since 2014, he also helped to save Chinese School for the OCCA community in 2016 and secured a vital grant for OCCA’s mission to promote Chinese culture in 2018. But what does ping-pong mean to Senator Skoufis?

“Companionship,” the senator answered almost immediately. “After a tough game, you bond.” With a laugh, he also mentioned that he was a very competitive person, so the games—especially close ones—were a lot of fun. Skoufis also admitted that he was very “rusty” in the beginning of his match with Hu, and that he only got better later. But with his poised stance and graceful reactions, one might have pinned Senator Skoufis down as an old professional at table tennis.

That assessment wouldn’t have been incorrect. Senator Skoufis started playing



Senator Skoufis (left) and Attorney Hu (right) kicked off the tournament.

table tennis in late middle school or early high school. At a local tournament, he happened to meet his future coach, U.S. Olympian Lily Yip. From there, he kept on training and joining table tennis clubs in both New Jersey and his graduate school, Columbia University. (And you can bet he spent plenty of time playing ping-pong during his five-week stay in China.)

Senator Skoufis’ story mirrored that of many other players’ at the OCCA tournament. Attorney Hu had grown up playing ping-pong, even if it took breaking rules to play. As a middle school student in

China, the only time he could play ping-pong was at noon, Hu explained. Being discovered and punished—which meant standing under the Chinese sun for an hour straight—never stopped Hu from continuing to play. By the time he graduated university in Germany, Hu had matched with professional ping-pongers.

Now, Hu sponsors events like the OCCA Ping-Pong Tournament worldwide. In China, schools, scholarships, and streets are named after him, and he has even had his face on a postage stamp. His goal? “Make people happy,” Hu said. “If I am

successful, I want to give back to society.”

To recall the smiling faces of the players at the tournament certainly makes it seem like Hu achieved his goal. Several players cited that ping-pong was not only a great way for them to exercise, but a fantastic way for them to keep in touch with friends and meet new ones. Local player Fang Cao shared: “I may not remember everyone I meet, but I build up friendships with other community members.” His friends, Dr. Shuangping Wang and Andy Chen, echoed the sentiment. “It’s partaking in Chinese culture,” Dr. Wang added.

At the end of the day, Team C of Bergen County won first place, with Team B of Orange County and Team E of Bergen County taking second and third respectively. Team C, consisting of players Stephen Shen, Kegong Zhang, Kevin Deng, and Harry Gao, claimed their championship with joy and grace. Winning player Stephen Shen—who also grew up playing ping-pong and now plays with his children—offered advice for both ping-pong and life: “Don’t lose until the last point!” In other words: never give up. And don’t forget you’re not alone, either. “They’re your friends,” Shen spoke about his fellow players. “Have fun and help each other.” For a ping-pong tournament, the lessons learned about nourishing one’s culture in a new land, giving back to society, and helping one another are undoubtedly inspiring, valuable, and uplifting.

《首届“知宇”杯乒乓球邀请赛在纽约橙郡鸣金》

By 易斌 / 史秀全 / 何谦

由著名华裔律师胡知宇赞助的纽约橙郡首届“知宇”杯乒乓球邀请赛于6月15日上午在纽约 Monroe-Woodbury 学区的中央山谷小学体育馆隆重举行。由纽约橙郡华人协会(OCCA)主办的赛事除来自大纽约周边三县当地球队和俱乐部之外，还邀请到纽约州参议员 James Skoufis 参加开幕仪式。

本次赛事吸引了来自新泽西州博根 WESTWOOD 乒乓球俱乐部，纽约州 磐石 PEARL RIVER 乒乓球队，以及纽约橙郡华人协会乒乓球队。比赛初赛三个总队六个球队抽签分成两组，按照循环淘汰的赛制捉对厮杀。经过近四个小时三十轮的淘汰，最后的决赛在橙郡 B 队和 Westwood C 队之间进行。经过三局鏖战，WESTWOOD 的 C 队最终赢得了 OCCA 首届“知宇杯”冠军荣誉称号。

在此次邀请赛开幕式上，参议员 Mr. Skoufis 与胡知宇律师为比赛热身，进来了单打友谊赛。Mr. Skoufis 特别提到他自己早年参加乒乓球训练的往事。他表示在这一项快速与技巧融合一体的比赛，可以密切队员之间的联系发展协调的关系。回忆组织此项赛事的吴康健会长也直接表达了举办赛事的不易，以传统运动形式为载体，促进社区的文化多元化发展，赛事不仅局限于参赛选手本身，也吸引大量华裔学生关注。谈及赞助赛事的初衷，胡知宇律师也十分欣慰的讲，赞助举办积极向上的体育运动会给社区和人群增加交流的机会，促进多元文化的融合与融入。

Additional ping-pong tournament photos may be viewed on page 9.



Senator Skoufis and OCCA president Wu presented the tournament logo with participants’ signatures to attorney Hu to appreciate his sponsorship.



Q&A with Jessica Wu

Edited by Nancy Song

The following is a complete transcription of Jessica Wu's Q&A portion of her Meet & Greet, which was featured in the May 2019 newsletter. All questions that were asked are included below for your convenience. Enjoy!

Q: I'm just curious because I obviously haven't applied to college in many, many years... are the essays typically a set essay no matter who you apply to, or are they different?

J: Most schools fall under the Common App, which has its own essay – a 650-word limit – along with 8 different essay prompts you can follow. The 8th essay prompt allows you to write about whatever you want, so essentially you can talk about what you think is important to you as a person, such as aspect of you or a story about you that really reflects who you are beyond your grades. You want to use those 650 words to discuss something that isn't somewhere else in your application and that cannot be seen through numbers. Each college also has supplemental essays – I would say those don't weigh as much. Pretty much every school has a supplemental essay that generally asks, "why you want to go to this school?". That's an important question you should also be asking yourself. There are other applications, like the Coalition Application, which has a slightly shorter essay but it's really the same prompt as the Common App. Some schools like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Georgetown University have their own separate applications. Those are a little bit different, but they're all simply variations of encouraging you to talk about an aspect of yourself that isn't found elsewhere in your application.

Q: Any suggestions for elementary schoolers?

J: For somebody in elementary or middle school, it's important to have fun. You can focus on your grades and do your homework and study hard, but I wouldn't say you really have to stress out about college right now. It's important to build those foundational things of wanting to learn. Reading is really important because when you read from a young age and you keep reading, it ingrains writer's ability. I found that to be true for myself. Much of the reason I'm able to write is that I read a lot when I was younger. That's definitely a good thing to do.

Q: What do you think was the most important aspect for college admissions? Is it GPA? SAT/ACT?

J: I find that if you're trying to get into a top school, you need to have that GPA and that SAT score, but that's not enough to get you in. The majority of the people in that applicant pool have that good GPA and that high SAT score that will qualify them. What set me apart was my essays and my letters of recommendation. In my essays, I talked about things that were quite personal and didn't really relate to the numbers on the paper. For my letters of recommendation, my teachers talked about the project that I mentioned before, like Student Voices Week. That speaks to being a leader, rather than just being another student in the pool.

Q: How would you recommend we prep for the SAT?

J: The SAT really depends on who you are as a person who studies. If you need someone to discipline you to make sure you are getting through those practice tests and reviewing those concepts, then an SAT course would be beneficial. In an SAT course, you go every week and you're forced to take an SAT test and listen to those review concepts, and you learn them in that way. But on the other hand, if you really think you're disciplined enough to self-study and work at it yourself, it can be done, for sure. You can also take the SAT more than once. I did not take the SAT more than once, but most people do. You can superscore, so say you work really hard and you get the score you want on Math but you don't get the score you want on English. The next time around, you can study really hard just for the English portion, take it again, and then your score gets superscored – so they take the best of each section.

Q: What about APs? How many APs did you apply for?

J: That's a good question, and it really depends on your school. An important part of what college admissions officers look at your application is something that your guidance counselor sends in called a "school report", which explains your school setting, your class size, and how many APs your school offers.

Basically, it gives the admissions officer a sense of what it's like in your school and what's normal there. If your school doesn't offer APs or doesn't offer a lot of APs, then you don't have to go and take 15 APs. That's totally fine. I personally, by the end of my senior year, will have taken 10 APs throughout the course of my high school career. But that's pretty abnormal for my school because I took all the sciences that were offered (3) and I self-studied AP US Government and Politics last year – which can be done! – and I didn't think that was terribly difficult. That looks good, too, because it shows that you're taking initiative to study something in-depth that you enjoy that maybe your school doesn't offer. But that being said, I have friends – one who got into Duke University and another who got into Brown University. Neither of them self-studied, but they were fine, and I don't think they took 10 APs. They took a little bit less than that. The number of APs does not really matter that much. I know there are kids across the country who take 20 APs but that's not necessary, I'll just put that out there. Some schools are very heavy in AP courses, but I know the schools in this area really aren't. Taking a few your junior year and senior year is good.

Q: How many APs for Cornwall are offered before senior year?

J: My sophomore year, I took AP Biology, which was out of the ordinary. Typically, kids in Cornwall don't take APs their sophomore year. My junior year, I took AP Chemistry, AP English Language and Composition (that is a very important course), and AP US History, then I self-studied AP US Government and Politics. I took 4 my junior year, and it's very normal to just take 3 because that's the limit of what our school offers. You're not going to get penalized for not taking more than that. My senior year course load was pretty much all APs.

Q: Do you have any idea if Harvard is going to accept any of those AP credits?

J: No, they're not going to, no. Harvard does not take AP credits at all. My year will actually be the last year that they consider them in any form. The only way for me to get credit for my APs is to get a 5 on the AP exam, first of all. Then you have to activate something called "Advanced Standing", which is basically graduating early and something that very few kids actually do at Harvard. Pretty much, the answer is no, you can't get any credit at all. Most other schools will take AP credit. A lot of the other Ivies do take AP credit.

Q: Do you know if Yale would have taken them?

J: I'm not sure. I think they would have accepted them. Just hearing from my friends, I know Brown will take AP Physics, but pretty much all Ivy League schools require 5s. If you're going to a school like the University of Rochester, they will take 4s and 3s. Most other state schools will take 3s and up. AP courses are also very useful in that way in that you can bypass a lot of your credits in your first year of college.

Q: What about SAT Subject? Can you talk about that?

J: That's a pretty important component, I would say. Most of the top schools recommend SAT IIs, but when they say that they "recommend", they really mean that they want to see them, and then there are schools that do actually require them. The SAT IIs are best taken right after you've taken the course. My freshman year, I took the SAT II in Biology and I scored really well. That was equally weighted, even many years later when I applied to college my senior year. A lot of them, I would say, are generally taken at the end of your junior year. The end of my junior year, I took 3 or 4 SAT Subject tests. In a test sitting, you cannot take both the SAT and the SAT II. You can only take one or the other, so you do have to look ahead in your schedule to see what you want to do and make sure that there's going to be a test date and that you'll have time to study for them and take those tests. You can take up to 3 Subject Tests in one sitting, but that's something you also want to be

careful with because you don't want to take 3 and then feel so overwhelmed with studying that you get a mediocre score on all of them. It's better to divide your studying and make sure that you get a really high score on 1 or 2. You really don't need more than 2 unless... I think Georgetown requires 3 SAT IIs, but other than that, they pretty much just look for 2. Math II is a great SAT II to take because it really reinforces your abilities in math. If you're going to be a science major, they look for you to take Chemistry, Biology, or Physics. Pretty much everything else is kind of liberal, but the SAT IIs reinforce the fact that you're good in the subject. It's just another measure.

Q: For the teacher recommendations for the colleges, say I want to go into biology and I have a science teacher who doesn't know me very well, but I have an art teacher who knows me personally. Would it be better to get a recommendation from the art teacher or the science teacher?

J: If you're looking to go into biology, a lot of the biology-specific schools require that you get a recommendation from a science teacher. It doesn't have to be your biology teacher, but when I was looking into applying to MIT, they require that you have one recommendation from a science or math teacher and one from a humanities teacher. If you're still a sophomore, you have all of next year to build a relationship with a teacher in that subject that you are looking to study, because it would be better to have a recommendation from your biology teacher vs. your art teacher. But you're not limited to one recommendation! If you think that your art teacher knows you really well in a way that other people don't, then just get both and then mix them so that you have your biology teacher as well as your art teacher.

Q: I know you did a lot of community service and leadership roles, so can you talk about the most significant story you want to share that may potentially be the reason that Harvard accepted you?

J: I don't know for sure whether this was on my application, but the fall of my junior year, I started coaching for this super awesome national organization called "Girls on the Run" that breaks down into local chapters. We have 2 weekly practices where you coach the young girls to not just run, but also you talk to them about self-love, character, and all these different good things. For me, that was important because I'm personally very passionate about feminism and women's rights, and that is something I want to work towards in the future. It was very inspiring for me to coach and I'm still coaching! In the spring of my junior year, I ran for President of my National Honor Society and won. In the fall of my senior year, I wanted to combine my interests in gender equality, so we organized this dance called the "Sadie Hawkins Dance", and it was something that was very new. We ended up raising \$2,400 for this organization called "She's the First", which sponsors a group of girls in an underdeveloped country so that they are the first in their family to graduate high school. That was something that I was very passionate about, and having that genuine passion really helps. Since this happened toward the end of November of my senior year, I don't actually know if it made it into the committee's decision. But I would say that that's the most significant thing I've done in high school or something that I'm most proud of, which was bringing people together and working towards a cause that I really care about. In general, leadership is a strong component of your application, and it's hard to show that through numbers. You can't show that through your GPA or your SAT scores, but you definitely can through your teacher recommendations, your essays, and your extracurriculars. Here's another reason to get involved in clubs your freshman year, even if you're not sure you'll want to stick through them: if you're there from freshman year, you can eventually take on a leadership position. You also want to have visions for the extracurricular that you're involved in and see where you want to take it when you are a junior or a senior.

(cont. on next page)

Q: In your freshman year, was college not on your radar yet? Did you have a vague plan?

J: In terms of specific schools, I really had no sense of whether I would be able to get into them. I just did well in my classes my freshman year. Looking back, I do wish I had done things a little bit differently, such as taking Health my freshman year – I’m taking Health now because it didn’t fit in my schedule. It’s important to get the required courses out of the way so they won’t freeze you from doing what you want in your later years. My freshman year, I joined Math Team, tennis, Key Club, and Love Notes, which is our acapella group. I did these things because they seemed fun and they *were* a lot of fun, which is why I stuck with them. My sophomore year, I joined a few more clubs that I had just discovered through the middle of my freshman year. If you’re in 8th or 9th grade, look towards upperclassmen and see which clubs are available in your school that you might be interested in trying. Again, there is no right answer. You don’t have to do Math Team to get into the school that you want because if that’s not your thing, you can find something else that *is* your thing.

Q: Why did you choose an Economics major?

J: Again, talking about what I was talking about before – gender equality, feminism – I would say my strengths are definitely math and then writing, and kind of analytical reasoning. I think the bridge between those things is economics. To me, economic inequality is the foundational reason why we have so many problems in our world. I would like to study economics at Harvard because there are a lot of routes you can take. I’m not really sure what I’ll end up doing – you can go into the business sector, but they also have advisers who do development economics. Development economics is basically looking at an NGO (non-governmental organization) or a small undeveloped country and reorganizing their system so that they’re more effective in distributing money to people and increasing the actual impact of welfare and things like that. That’s what I want to do, and I think economics is a good way to apply my skills and still do something I’m passionate about.

Q: The majority of us first generation Chinese immigrants that come here are shy, so people tend to think that we do not talk very much or express ourselves well to the public. Based on your experiences growing up, how do you go from a typical Chinese person to a leader?

J: The question is, basically, how do you overcome being shy and hesitant to take on leadership positions? A lot of it comes with – and I think my mom would agree with me – practicing from a very young age, getting involved with things, and then building your confidence and your skills because I’m sure you guys are all incredibly intelligent and you should remember that! Remember your own worth and the fact that even though we are first generation and we don’t necessarily look like the majority of the other kids at school, you are equally valuable and have an equal say, for sure, in everything that you do. As long as you stick to that and don’t let what you look like define you at all, don’t let this idea that, “*oh, you might be shy*”, define you. Just step beyond that and practice that. The more you practice stepping out of your shell, the more you’ll find your comfort zone expanding. “*The more I step out of it, the more it’s going to expand*” until eventually you’re in this place where you’re confident in your own abilities and in the fact that you can lead others because you can, and you are definitely all very capable of doing that! Especially if you’re in late middle school or high school, which most of you are, there’s so much time for you to grow as a person and you should capitalize on those opportunities. Put yourself out there! That’s the #1 thing: don’t be afraid to put yourself out there and don’t let other people stop you or tell you that you have to do a certain thing.

Q: I know you’ve done a lot of charity work. What do you plan for this summer? Any kind of projects?

J: My plans for this summer? Something is currently in the works for me. This is the first year that Harvard is launching “Service Starts with Summer”, where incoming freshmen commit to doing 100 hours of community service in their town

that has to be community-based, project-based, and solution-focused. It’s kind of like a specific thing you have to do in your community, like targeting a problem that your community has. What I intend to do in some capacity is I’m talking with the guidance department at my school if I’m going to run an 8-week SAT course for kids who cannot otherwise afford SAT prep, so that they will be able to attend this class. There will also be a college essay/college application workshop that will also run for 8 weeks. I’ll also have a few workshops on transitioning to high school, how to study, how to access your teachers, how to access extra tutoring, studying, things like that. It’s mostly for the hidden wealth disparity in Cornwall, which is bad. These days, with fast fashion, it’s kind of hard to tell people’s economic standing, but there are definitely students in my school who can’t afford that, and it puts them at a disadvantage. Whatever I feel like I can do to bridge that a little bit would be awesome, so that’s what I intend to do over the summer. For Harvard’s Service Starts with Summer Program – they call it “3SP” – certain applicants will be selected to receive a stipend, so that’s the reason that I’ll be able to do this this summer. But that’s something I’m very much looking forward to.

Q: If your writing is struggling, if some children need help from their parents, should you help them with writing? Or should you just let it go and maybe when they’re getting older, it will pick up?

J: That’s a good point. It depends a little bit on who you are and your inherent abilities. You might just be a stronger person in math, and that’s fine, in which case maybe you want to look to improving your writing in some ways? If you read a lot, you should naturally have a better sense of writing. You just really have to practice writing on your own, which if you’re in 9th or 10th grade, you can definitely do that. Just take some time each week to journal. You don’t ever have to go back and read what you’ve written, but it’s just the fact that you’ve written and practiced putting your pen on paper and getting that sentence flow out. That will naturally improve your abilities and get your ideas out. In English class, you will improve – we read books in school, we analyze them, we write research papers. If you really put value into your English class, then it will definitely improve your writing abilities. My favorite class that I took in high school by far was English 11AP, which is AP English Language and Composition. I definitely learned so much more in that class than I did in any other class because it not only teaches you to think on a deeper level, but also to write out what you’re thinking, and that’s really important.

Q: What is your opinion on the importance of Chinese School? Or is it not important?

J: Chinese School? Again, what I was saying before is there are multiple different paths to success, right? But if Chinese School right now is a part of your life that you value, then I would say definitely, it’s so important to keep going with it because that’s something you will be able to put on your college application, if it’s something you end up wanting to write about. I know for me personally, what I wrote about in my Common App essay was very much related to the fact that I am first generation. Between my grandparents and me, there is this divide because we moved across the sea, right? Chinese School is a place that is kind of rare in Orange County. Being Chinese is a big part of our identities and this is a place where that culminates, right? If you want Chinese School to be a part of your college application, to be a part of who you are, then definitely, it’s important and it will be very valuable on your college application. That’s not to say that that you *have* to have it, but again if it’s something that is important to you, then let it be important to you.

Q: Did you take the AP Chinese?

J: I did *not* take the AP Chinese. I know a lot of people do, so if you want to do that in addition to whatever language you’re taking at school, that will be great on your college application because it does show initiative and that you’re willing to study something else in your own free time.

Q: Any APs for your 2nd language? French or Spanish?

J: No, I didn’t take any APs for that.

Q: Chinese is very important and can be utilized in your college or medical school application.

J: Yeah, that’s very true. Chinese is an incredibly invaluable skill. For me, looking back, I do wish I kept with Chinese School and learned more Chinese. I’ve kind of forgotten a lot of what I learned – I can still speak it but being able to read and write is a really valuable thing, no matter where you go.

Q: You’ve volunteered to open an SAT class for our Chinese School, but there was no space available. If anyone were to ask you to do personal tutoring, would you be willing to help?

J: Yeah, I probably won’t run the private class, but I can do one-on-one tutoring because we can do that at the library or I could come do it at your house, for sure. Also, college essay workshoping – at the end of your junior year, drafting essays and then having somebody else give you a second opinion and where you can fix things and how you can be more unique in your writing. I think that’s really valuable, too. Just navigating the college process, which a lot of my friends who I know hired college counselors, which I don’t think is necessary because you can do it on your own. I can definitely help you navigate that. Some things do get confusing and you want to make sure that all your ends are tied.

Q: What do you consider to be a good GPA or SAT score?

J: It really depends on what schools you’re looking for –

Q: Let’s just say like, Harvard.

J: For Harvard, your SAT score has to be a 1550 or higher. That’s pretty much the minimum, especially a 790 or higher on your Math. But that’s not something that’s concrete. If you get something slightly lower than that but you have something else in your application that’s making you stand out, it’s totally fine, for sure. In terms of your GPA, that I’m not really sure, to be honest. In high school, I’ve always been at the top of my class, so I don’t really know for sure. But I know that my friend is going to Duke on a full merit scholarship and her GPA is... *not* as great? So, you can make mistakes, obviously. It’s okay.

Q: What’s not a great GPA? What would you say the number is “not as great”? (silence) I’m sure it’s not 82 (audience laughs).

J: For me being at the top of my class, we happen to be an abnormal year at Cornwall, but my weighted GPA has consistently been around 103. I would say that my friend is probably at 100 right now?

Q: Ah yeah, that’s great (chuckles to self while another person across the room asks, “How do you get 103?”).

J: But, I mean! But you’re not considering is that, um, when you take advanced cla–!

Q: No, no, no! Again, it’s relative, though. It matters!

J: Right, right! But when you take advanced classes, they are *noting* the fact that you are taking advanced classes and you also get weight on your GPA. My unweighted GPA is a 98/99, so really having those advanced classes pushes me up towards that much higher number. There is definitely flexibility, so another thing that they look for is maybe you were not as great or strong of a student your freshman year, but then they saw that you worked hard, and in your junior year and your senior year, you stepped up your game and got much better grades. They’re going to note that and respect the fact that you *pushed yourself* to work harder. Don’t think that there is one GPA you have to get, and that *this* is the number, and if you don’t have that number, you can’t get in.

Q: So, they don’t want to see you slacking, either...

J: Yeah, they don’t want to see you slacking, yeah (audience laughs).

(cont. on next page)



Q: Do ACTs and SATs weigh the same?

J: Yes, I would say absolutely. The equivalent of having a 1550 on the SAT is having a 35 or up on the ACT. But the thing with the ACT is it doesn't really get superscored in the same way, so you can only have a composite score. You basically are *not* really superscoring, which is probably one of the reasons that people choose to take the SAT. I never really studied for the ACT because I chose to take the SAT in the beginning of my junior year and then just didn't need to take it again.

Q: Did you take the ACT?

J: No, I did not. A lot of people say that if you're more of a math-oriented mind or you're fast and timing is your thing, you can get things done in a short amount of time, then the ACT proves to be kind of easier. I wouldn't say that any one of them is easier or more difficult, but that's definitely true. Both have the essay, which is another important thing. People say that the essay is optional now, but for those top schools, it's not *really* optional. You should really take the essay portion with the SAT or the ACT because again, it enforces the fact that you are a good writer and that the college essay you've written wasn't written by somebody else. **YOU WROTE THAT ESSAY** because you're capable of writing. For the SAT, that is a very formulaic essay that is easy to train for. You can really practice and study and pretty much whatever they give you on the test will be a passage and then you write an essay based on that passage. That's pretty much like, you've got it! The ACT is an open-ended question. They give you a very short prompt and then you write towards that open prompt by bringing in your own moral values and discussing them in an eloquent manner. That's definitely a pretty big difference between the 2 essays and it's just about what you want to do and what you think your strength will be.

Q: How important is ranking?

J: Not as important as people say. A lot of schools in the country don't even have ranks because they think it's detrimental to mental health in high school, which I would say is pretty true. I know that people in my school can get very competitive over this, but the reality is, if your GPA is slightly off from the person above you and that puts you down a number, it's not really going to affect you. There are certain scholarships, like for the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), where you have to be in the top 10% of your class in order to qualify for the scholarship. But it also depends on your school size. If you're at a huge school like Monroe-Woodbury, being in the top 10% is not as important compared to a smaller school like Cornwall, where there's only 260 people per class and naturally, it has more of a value. Don't get too caught up in that. As long as you're doing your best and getting as good grades as you can, that's important.

Q: If you take the ACT and the SAT, do you have to submit them both? Can you only submit one? So, if you don't like your ACT results, does it just automatically get reported? Or are you better off *not* taking them both?

J: Basically what happens is that right when you sign up for the ACT or the SAT, you can choose to send your scores to a college, but some people hesitate because, "*What if I do bad? Then that score will automatically get sent!*". What you can do is take the test and then after the test, when your scores come back, you can decide which schools you want to send it to based on that. If you do take the ACT and the SAT and you decide that your SAT score is much better, you don't have to send that ACT score unless the school requires it, but that's typically *not* the case. Some students take both, do well on both, send both, and it's just like a reinforcement. I don't think it really gives them any advantage.

Q: That's the same with the Subject Tests, right? If you do really poorly on one, then you can just hide it from them?

J: Yeah, pretty much. The thing with the Subject Tests is that some schools do require that you send every single score that you have. I know that for the SAT, you have to send ALL of your scores. If you're superscoring, you can't just send your superscore – you have to send every sitting that you've had. That doesn't necessarily have a lot of weight. They just want to see that you've taken it multiple different times.

Q: Which Subject Tests did you take?

J: I took Biology my freshman year, and then my junior year I took Math II, Chemistry, US History – that's it. I took French the following summer, but honestly, I didn't do well and it didn't affect me. You don't need to take more than 3, honestly.

Q: How do the SAT Subject Tests compare to the Regents? Harder?

J: It's definitely more difficult. The questions are a lot more pointed for the SAT IIs. It's usually better after AP. During my junior year, I took AP Chemistry and AP US History, and I had just taken Precalculus, so taking Math II, US History, and Chemistry was pretty easy. I didn't feel I needed to study that much. Whereas my freshman year, I was taking Biology Regents and then took the SAT II Biology, so I studied a lot for that SAT II Biology. I ended up doing really well because I studied, so it depends on how much you want to study. Actually, taking the Regents and then forcing yourself to study on your own can almost be better because you're studying more to fill in the areas where you're lacking. That can be very beneficial.

Q: Last question: If you could use a few words, how would you describe yourself? What do you want to say?

J: I would say that I'm somebody who is genuinely passionate about what I do. I have a *lot* of different interests, for sure. I'm looking forward to narrowing in on that in college, but also keeping an open mind. I think that's important no matter what age you are. You always have space to grow, and who I am now is not set in stone at all. I'm positive that I'm going to grow in my college years. But for now, I know that the one thing that is fundamental to me is that I care about what I do and when I do something, I do it with full heart. ♥

My Chinese Class in OCCS

by Vicky Wong

At the start of this year in Chinese School, we were all rookies at the Chinese language, which was all new to us. Even so, together we were able to grow and learn so much in Ms. Lifang Li's class. With an open heart, she taught us pronunciation, how to write, basic characters, and sentence structure, as well as help mature our knowledge of the language and become more comfortable using Chinese.

During the past 8 months, I have been dedicating my weekends to learning Chinese with the Orange County Chinese Association. Around early fall, I enrolled in Mrs. Li's level 1 Chinese class. During my time here, I have had the chance to learn and experience many

new things. For one, not only have I learned some of the basics of reading and writing in Chinese, but I have also learned about Chinese culture. Throughout the year, I learned about the different festivals that take place each month, the various food that is eaten during each holiday, and I even participated in the Chinese New Year celebration. I am thankful that I had the chance to learn Chinese with Mrs. Li, and that we were able to help each other throughout the year. All in all, OCCA provides an excellent opportunity to not only learn Chinese, but to experience the culture as well.

Being part of OCCS has been a fruitful ex-

perience that has taught me more than just Chinese itself. The classroom is set up in an elementary fashion (desks set up in groups, rather than individually), which requires you to look directly at your classmates, allowing for more frequent people-to-people interactions. With this type of set-up, you are encouraged to talk with your classmates and build friendships. Of course, as a student you do not solely participate in the classroom. The OCCA Chinese Spelling Bee is an event near the end of the school year that requires students from the other classes to partake in a friendly competition with each other.

(cont. on next page)



My class with Attorney Zhiyu Hu and Senator James Skoufis on June 15th, 2019. Front row L-R: Gabby DeLeon, Emma DeLeon, Vicky Wong. Back row L-R: Attorney Hu, Senator Skoufis and Ms. Lifang Li.

Community News

Congratulations to OCCA's 2019 High School Graduates!



Rachel Shih graduated from Goshen Central High School and will attend **Stony Brook University** this fall with a major in Business Administration.



Jessica Wu, valedictorian of the Class of 2019 at Cornwall Central High School, will attend **Harvard College** this fall with a major in Economics.



Congratulations to **Andrew Yi** for his performance in the 3000 Meter Steeplechase at the New York State Track and Field championships!



Amy Jacobson (née Wang) will attend **New York Medical College** this fall to pursue an MD. In 2018, she graduated from the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University with a BS in Biology and Society. Amy is the oldest daughter of Dr. Shuangping Wang and Ms. Xiujun Yan.

Congratulations to the OCCA Youth members who have received summer internship offers!

Good luck on your internship journeys next week! Thank you for these great opportunities!

Senator Skoufis' office: 9 (1 still processing due to delayed application)

Dr. Jenny Lu's clinic: 3

Dr. Yu's biomedical research lab at the Steven Institute of Technology: 2

Attorney Zhiyu Hu's law firm at Orange County Supreme Court: 5

(cont. from page 7 – "My Chinese Class in OCCS")

The benefits of competition are that it builds up a child's individual skills and acts as a source of motivation for the student, especially when a prize is involved. The OCCA creates a great environment for students to build their social skills, among other skills needed later in life.

Attending OCCS has been amazing. I have loved every single second from the time I spent with my classmates to the countless events this school has provided for us. Even just helping with decorations brought me and my friends more joy than we would have anticipated. Since this school focuses mainly on educating the students to the best of their abilities, it does so without hesitating to make any sacrifices. Being a part of Mrs. Li's first class has been an absolute honor. She has been the most passionate, patient, and undoubtedly the best teacher we could ever ask for.

Our class started the year off with no knowledge of the Chinese culture but concluded on June 22nd, 2019, winning spelling bees, celebrating the holidays with the school community, and learning more than anyone could ever teach us. My words are very genuine: I will miss looking forward to our weekends together, I will miss this class, and I will miss our close-knit friendships that we cultivated



throughout the year. I cannot wait until the next year comes around to have yet another astounding year with this class.

This class has provided us so many opportunities for expanding our knowledge in Mandarin and even in learning the Chinese culture. We appreciate all the effort that was put into helping us learn every Saturday. It was exciting, and we definitely won't let Ms. Li's teaching go unnoticed. After she guided us so skillfully this year, we all look forward to continuing learning Mandarin together next year, and hopefully in the years to follow.

OCCA/S 2019 Summer Outing
Saturday, 13-July, 2019
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Save the Date! Come ready for some good food and fun games. If you would like to attend this event, please email Dr. Chenghua Deng at chdeng001@yahoo.com. As always, we appreciate that you bring a favorite dish to share with our friends and families.
 Have ideas for the outing (games to play, things to do...)? Let us know. We are looking for input on making this a successful event for all members of the Orange County Chinese Association.

Ping-Pong Tournament Photos

June 1st, 2019: OCCA vs. Rockland Tournament



June 15th, 2019: OCCA Zhiyu Cup Tournament



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