
- Esther Kim (Clinical Psychology, Child Development/Asian American Studies minor, 2015)
- Chinese Youth Initiative Co-Coordinator/Seeding Change Fellow; Full-time, 40 hours per week
- Unpaid but receiving Career Center Internship Grant

What do you do as an intern at this organization?
The Chinese Youth Initiative (CYI) Summer internship program is a 7-week intensive opportunity for high school students to learn about Asian American identity, history, and issues that impact Boston's Chinatown and other communities while gaining experience in community grassroots organizing. This summer, I helped plan and run the CYI summer internship program. I developed curricula and facilitated workshops for the youth interns on topics such as Asian American history, Chinatown community stabilization, systems of oppression, community organizing and campaign development. I also did one-on-one's with the youth interns and provided support as they challenged themselves to embrace their inherent leadership capacity and work together to create positive change in their communities.

How did you find your internship?
I found my internship through a friend who posted the fellowship opportunity on Facebook.

What do you enjoy most about your internship?
I enjoyed building community with this year's CYI youth interns and challenging my understanding of what "youth empowerment" means in my own life and community. To support the CYI interns, I had to first believe that I was capable of overcoming my fears and insecurities and working with others to create social change on various internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and ideological levels. I was humbled and amazed when the youth interns shared their life stories and experiences with me, as well as their struggles to overcome feelings of helplessness when learning about the pervasiveness of racism and other systems of oppression. I am continually inspired by these youth interns who feel empowered to make positive change in their communities and fight for social justice for all people.

What do you find challenging?
My internship required long hours and often work on weekends, too, so I struggled to make time to rest and reflect on my experiences. Sometimes my co-coordinator and I felt stressed when we didn't have time to be fully invested in the youth interns' growth and well-being. The other CPA staff supported us and helped in whatever ways they could, whether through leading workshops, helping us think through curriculum and program structure, providing emotional support, and so on. We both learned to depend on one another and others to work towards our goals for the CYI Summer Internship program.

What advice would you offer to someone who wants to make the most of an internship like yours?
At the beginning, I sat down with my supervisor and discussed my personal learning goals for the summer. I had the opportunity to gain experience in meaningful community work, learn about community organizing and youth empowerment, and take initiative in learning what I wanted to learn. My advice would be to set personal learning and development goals for yourself as you negotiate your responsibilities with your work/internship supervisor. Also, I wish I had researched and applied for internships sooner, rather than rushing to complete applications right before their deadlines.

About the Organization
Chinese Progressive Association; Boston, MA

The CPA is a grassroots community organization that works for full equality and empowerment of the Chinese community in Boston area and beyond. We seek to improve the living and working conditions of Chinese Americans and to involve community members in making decisions that affect our lives.