



New generations of independent, fulfilled individuals centered in their strengths and committed to social responsibility.

## Annual Report 2014-2015

FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 – AUGUST 31, 2015



**Project:VISION**  
a nonprofit youth organization

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

## DEAR FRIENDS,

Project: VISION is proud to share the accomplishments of our students and our organization as we complete another year of service! This year was about strengthening our program model and building a solid organizational foundation in preparation for the next phase of our growth. With the help of dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters, we continue to serve more students year after year.

As part of our efforts to expand fundraising, we have demonstrated to new and existing supporters the tangible benefits our program has provided to students resulting in increased support and revenue. However, the need for youth services in the community still far exceeds the resources we have to deploy. Despite the challenge of meeting such demands, Project: VISION was able to support 140 youths with our core programs. Our approach to programming continues to be guided by our belief in holistic youth development that helps them LEARN, SERVE, and LEAD. With the right combination of support services, experiences, and opportunities, PV youth are equipped with the necessary tools to achieve academic success and increased commitment to learning, while also developing personal strengths and building the positive attitudes towards one's community that they need for a successful future.

After school tutoring and college readiness programs continue to help students engage in education and reach academic goals. This year again, 100% of PV students were promoted to the next grade on time, and all graduating seniors were accepted to college. Service and leadership programs continue to help deepen youths' ties to their community, while they learn to be positive examples for their peers and prepare for the workforce. Youth participation in

community service, youth-led projects, and career readiness programs is higher than ever before which has helped enrich our students' experiences at PV.

We continue to focus on capacity building across the different channels in our organization. We have expanded our team of program staff to ensure continued high quality programming with a growing body of students, while development staff has doubled efforts to improve on fundraising knowledge and practices to attract more resources. In addition, the Board of Directors welcomed new leadership to its ranks and renewed its commitment with concise plans to strategically grow the organization over the next five years.

Our accomplishments would not have been possible without the support of so many who believe in the mission and work of Project: VISION. Your support has helped the organization reach a new level of success this year, and we look forward to continuing to provide the services that each of our youth need to achieve bright futures in this next stage of growth for Project: VISION.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and youth of Project: VISION, we again thank you – our generous supporters – for your continued commitment to our mission.

Sincerely,



Gabriel Wong  
Chair of the Board



Karen Chiu  
Executive Director

Project: VISION is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide youth of Chicago's Chinatown and Bridgeport communities with tools for educational, personal, and civic development.

# Learn

Educational development means fostering success at school, building effective learning skills, and encouraging appreciation for learning and knowledge. We offer after school homework tutoring, college workshops, and ACT prep classes.

“

Project: VISION helps me develop the skills I need to succeed in the future.

KASSI, GRADE 8

”



“

Project: VISION has so many opportunities that prepare me for college. I'm looking forward to the future!

WILLIE, GRADE 10

”

# serve

Community service is an integral part of positive youth development. Project: Youth Initiative aims to foster a sense of social responsibility in youth by building awareness, fostering positive attitudes, and providing meaningful service opportunities.

# lead

Personal development means building each youth's strengths and interests, and fostering confidence and positive attitudes. Youth find mentors in our staff, while community service projects and career readiness programs help build leadership skills.

# our background

Project: VISION was an idea conceived by a group of young professionals, students, and volunteers who saw a need for community youth to have a place to call their own. In fall 2004, with the help of a few volunteers and borrowed space from the Chicago Public Library and Valentine Boys and Girls Club in Bridgeport, Project: VISION piloted its first tutoring program. Since then, our programs have reached over 450 youth and continue to be provided free to families.



# our students

youth between the ages of 12 and 21 from Chinatown, Bridgeport, and surrounding neighborhoods

**85%** Chinese American  
reflects the demographics of the area

**85%** from first generation  
immigrant families

**97%** are enrolled in  
Chicago Public Schools

**70%** would be the first in their  
families to attend college

**85%** from lower income families

\*Project: VISION students surveyed in  
2014-2015 school year

# our purpose

Asian Americans are often associated with the “model minority” stereotype, and thus our community is frequently overlooked as one that is in need of social services, especially for our youth. The truth is that every community has an underserved population, and we are no exception.

In fact, community youth face many socio-economic barriers. At neighborhood schools, over 80% of students are from low-income households, and at least 30% are limited English learners. PV's goal is to provide these students with support, prevent them from falling behind, and to ensure that they reach high school and achieve college access and persistence.

Furthermore, youth often do not have access to social and emotional supports and personal development opportunities they need to succeed. Like many urban communities, after school can be a vulnerable time for our youth. According to the Illinois Youth Survey (IYS): 62% of 8th graders in Chinatown spend at least one day each week home alone after school, and one in three youths participates in no activities outside of school. Youth also recognize problems such as crime, bullying, and substance abuse are prevalent in the community. Taken together, these factors put youth at risk to engage in risky behaviors.

PV provides a safe place for youth while engaging them in positive activities with the guidance of positive role models who can help keep them focused on a positive path. Programs aim to help youth develop strengths and skills, and build positive attitudes, character, and confidence that ultimately prepare them to become well-rounded, socially responsible future leaders who can continue to build our community.

## what difference has PV made in my life?



“When I was struggling with ACT test prep, my PV ACT instructor asked to speak with me after class one day. He wanted to talk to me about the importance of the ACT. When I asked why he was taking the time to do all this for me, he replied, ‘because whether you make it to college **matters to me.**’

Two years later, I still think about his words with every important decision I make.

MELODY, GRADE 12”

“My favorite thing about Project: VISION is having a place where I can finish my homework and get help with difficult material before taking an exam. I also love that my tutors care enough to help me with my problems outside of just school work.”



IRENE, GRADE 12



“After participating in many service opportunities at PV, I was inspired to become more active in the community. I want to continue to help others in any way possible inspiring others to do the same along the way.”

KRISTY, GRADE 10”



VICTORIA, GRADE 11

I have been a student at Project: VISION since 6th grade. At the start, I felt overwhelmed with schoolwork mostly because I had trouble understanding the concepts. When my mom suggested getting tutored at Project: VISION, my life took a pivotal turn. Since then, I have been getting better grades and more importantly, a better understanding of my work. Karen is a tutor who has really helped me since the beginning. She has especially helped me to improve in math and science. She would guide me through each math problem step by step, and she would make science interesting by elaborating on how the material relates to our everyday life. Not only did PV help me improve in subjects at school, but also helped me to prepare for the ACT through their ACT Prep classes. The classes have helped me tremendously in improving some of my weaknesses: grammar rules, managing my time, and brushing up my math skills.

I am grateful to be able to use PV's programs and be tutored by knowledgeable tutors that care about my academic growth and make sure that I fully grasp concepts and have a deeper understanding and insight into a subject. Now, I feel more confident in my schoolwork and feel less stressed about taking tests and quizzes. I've come to enjoy learning, and with the skills I have learned from the tutoring program, I feel excited and ready for college!"

# education highlights



“ Project: VISION is an environment where I can feel more focused. ”

KEVIN, GRADE 10

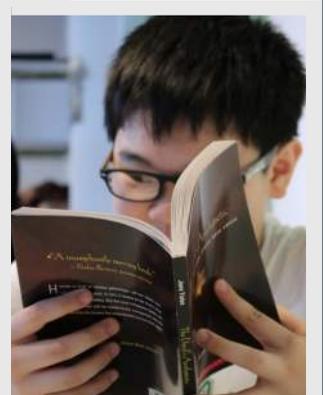
during the 2014-2015 school year...

The After School Homework Tutoring Program assisted 123 youths in grades 6 - 12. We help students work toward their academic potentials by encouraging them to take an active role in their education and nurturing appreciation for learning.

Each student received an average of 4 hours of tutoring each week.

- 100% were promoted to the next grade on time.
- 96% maintained B-average or above grades.
- 82% made an improvement by at least one letter grade in a core class.
- 76% met at least one personal academic goal.

Project: College Bound helped prepare 52 of our students for the future. Each student participated in at least 2 college readiness activities including an ACT prep course, essay writing, financial aid, and resume workshops as well as college panels and visits. 100% of our high school seniors were accepted and plan to attend college in fall 2015.





Project: VISION strives to help youth understand the importance of volunteerism and realize that they can make an impact with community service. According to the Illinois Youth Survey, only 24% of community youth participate in service or volunteer activities. At Project: VISION, 110 youth (89%) engaged in service this year, collectively earning over 1,440 service learning hours.

Some of our service projects included:

- Helping to clean up the banks of the Chicago River
- Distributing groceries to the elderly at the Food Circle
- Sorting and packaging donated food for the Greater Food Depository

“ I like the service opportunities because it allows me to be more connected to the community. ”



# stories of service

My most memorable service experience was at the Greater Chicago Depository, where we helped pack rice into separate bags to give to the food impoverished of the community. We learned that many people don't have the opportunity to have food readily available around them. It helped me realize how grateful I should be for food, shelter, and other things that are often taken for granted everyday.

This experience has motivated me to give back to the community as often as possible. I supported many people that day and learned that even doing small tasks of service, like repacking rice, can lead to bigger changes in the future. I hope that I can continue to help the community. Not only does volunteering positively impact those we are serving, it also can inspire others to do good and give back.

ERIC C., GRADE 10





At Project: VISION, being a leader means taking opportunities to learn and gain experiences that foster personal growth, build character, and nurture positive attitudes. PV youth also learn to make good life choices and become active citizens who are prepared for the future.

By helping youth develop strengths, interests, and leadership skills, our programs aim to engage youth and empower them to become positive examples for their peers and help make positive changes in their community.



Project: VISION is a place that provides opportunities in preparing m

# Leadership

This year, 49 high school students participated in our leadership program:

- Teen Advisory Panel is a student-led organization that partners with the Asian Health Coalition to use social media and photography to build awareness about substance abuse in the community.
- Community Quest is a blog where students explore and understand their community's history and culture, exploring the importance of personal and community stories.
- Project: LEAD is a career development program provided by the Stay in School initiative. Students complete and take on summer internships.

... the program has helped students realize that education is for a success.



provides so many  
for life ...

# highlights

participated in at least one

a collaborative initiative with  
n. Youth created posters using  
ness and help prevent youth  
ity.

ing project to help students un-  
story, needs, and assets, while  
sonal leadership.

er readiness and professional  
d in collaboration with Exelon's  
nts also get the opportunity to

ed me see how important  
successful and lasting career.

LAUREN, GRADE 11

EMILY, GRADE 11



“ Working as a summer intern in the Regulatory Strategies & Solutions (RSS) department at Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) was an amazing experience.

This was an opportunity I had because of PV's High School Scholars Program and Exelon's Stay in School Initiative (SISI). During these seven weeks, I was immersed in the professional environment, encouraged to ask questions, and constantly challenged to do my best work. I researched regulatory activities in other states, formatted important documents and projects, and analyzed case studies. Through this, I developed many skills in communication, problem-solving, and research, while also improving my confidence and the way I present myself in a professional environment.

Before the program, I was relatively reserved and independent, and although I still am, the experience pushed me to accept help, express my curiosity, and value teamwork. I also took advantage of being the youngest in the program, often receiving valuable advice from my work mentors that I can use in other parts of my life, while developing strong relationships with my fellow interns. Overall, this opportunity was a great learning experience and has changed me for the better. ”



# thank you!

Project: VISION's beginnings were made possible by the generosity of those who gave their time and resources. Today, our volunteers, donors and funders, and community partners continue to provide invaluable support for our work. We thank them all for their generous commitments and contributions to our organization and, more importantly, our youths' futures.



## board of directors

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Chair of the Board

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## lead staff

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**Development Manager**  
**Sandy Guan**

**Program Manager**  
**Sandy Moy Kaehler**

**Program Staff**  
**Sicha Chantaprasopsuk**

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## partners

Asian Health Coalition  
Chicago Taiwanese  
American Professionals  
Chinatown 5K  
Communities in  
Schools of Chicago  
Illinois Institute  
of Technology

## corporate/ foundation contributors

Afterlife Entertainment  
Ahjoomah's Apron  
Asian Health Coalition  
Asian Giving Circle  
BMO Harris  
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Cathay Bank Foundation  
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American Professionals  
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Corporation  
Discover Financial  
Services  
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Chicago Pizza Tours  
Chinese American Museum of Chicago  
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Grant Wu  
Hauwei Lien  
Jiwon Song  
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Melinda Holtz  
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Purple Pig  
ReMarked  
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Shedd Aquarium  
Skydeck Chicago  
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Stampin' Up  
Steppenwolf Theatre  
Sweet Thyme Soaps  
Tiny Prints  
Ultimate Jetcharters  
Vanille Patisserie  
Victory Gardens  
Vincent Kwan  
Vincent Ruan  
Wines of Humanity

## individual contributors

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Richard Wilusz  
Gabriel Wong  
Justin Wong  
Sharon Wong  
Cassie Zhang  
Alice & Jared Zhao



# statement of financial position

	2015	2014
<b>assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	52,645	58,367
Contributions Receivable	7,842	4,517
Refundable lease deposit	1,800	1,800
Prepaid Insurance	807	761
Prepaid Programming Expense	704	976
Prepaid Fundraising Expense	592	662
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>64,390</b>	<b>67,083</b>

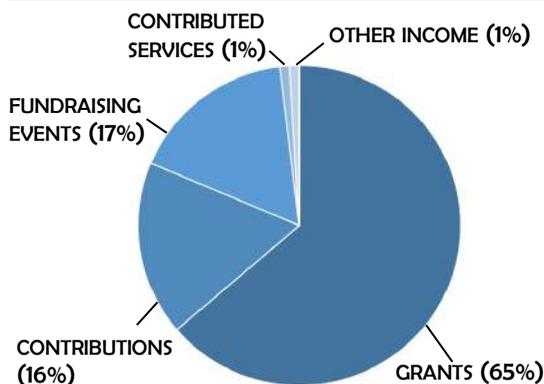
<b>liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	4,647	509
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>4,647</b>	<b>509</b>

<b>net assets</b>		
Temporarily Restricted	38,282	36,998
Unrestricted	21,461	29,576
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>64,390</b>	<b>67,083</b>

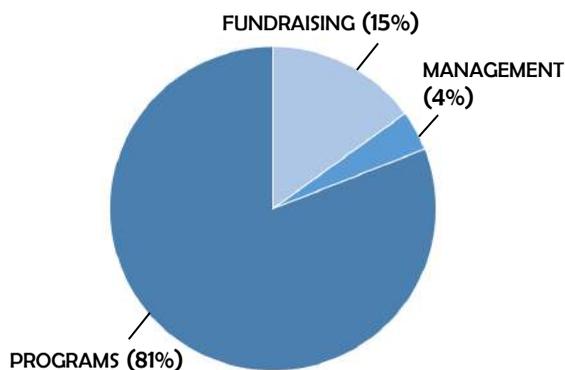
	2015	2014
<b>revenues and other support</b>		
Contributions* <small>*Corporate and individual donations</small>	30,455	28,582
Fundraising Events	32,274	26,501
Grants	119,922	101,370
Contributed services	1,000	1,000
Other Income	1,515	1,873
<b>TOTAL REVENUES AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>185,166</b>	<b>159,325</b>

<b>expenses</b>		
Program Services	155,530	116,269
Support Services		
Management/General	7,122	5,943
Fundraising	29,344	17,072
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>191,997</b>	<b>139,284</b>

2015 revenues and other support



2015 expenses



# Looking forward



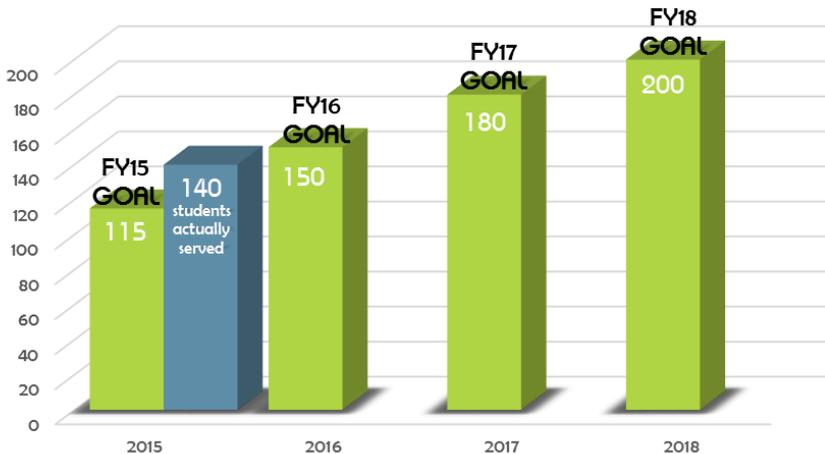
I have been a student at Project: VISION ever since I was in 6th grade, and there is no doubt that spending the last 7 years here as a student has developed me, not only for the academic setting, but also for the real world. Academics has always been something that I work hard at, and as I got older, of course, it became much harder to excel. However, I have been fortunate enough to be able to rely on Project: VISION to assist me with my more challenging classes, standardized tests, and working toward my college goals. After taking a practice ACT for the first time, I had a difficult time improving to my goal score. However, after taking the ACT prep course at PV, which included a lot of practice and test taking tips, I am proud to say that I was able to reach my goal this past June.

Besides academic assistance, PV has also provided me with tools to become a more well-rounded person through leadership and community service programs. Last year, Project: LEAD taught me professional skills such as interviewing and networking, and I was even offered a summer internship. Through service projects with PV, I have also learned the importance of helping the community. I have volunteered at the Benton House food pantry several times, and although it can be tiring work, it is always rewarding to see how many people can benefit from just a few hours of my time volunteering.

I definitely have to credit Project: VISION for helping me achieve my academic goals and providing me with many life skills that I will always be able to take with me in my future endeavors. Next year, I hope to attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and major in animal sciences to ultimately become a small animal veterinarian.

By 2018, Project: VISION aims to help even more students like Jessica reach their full potentials and achieve their dreams.

Timeline of Students Served by Project: VISION



FY16 GOALS



To achieve this target, Project: VISION will be working on . . .

- Increasing the breadth and depth of our programs, especially service, leadership, and career readiness.
- Building and retaining a team of strong program staff.
- Securing a permanent space with capacity to grow.
- Developing and implementing a sustainable, diversified fundraising strategy to support growth.
- Growing a strong Board of Directors that can lead the organization through the next phase of growth.



# Project: VISION, Inc.

MONDAYS THRU FRIDAYS 3PM TO 7PM | SATUDAYS 10AM TO 1PM



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