By Cody Yiu

Graduating students from the Asian American Civic Association’s (AACA) education and workforce development programs shared stories of overcoming hardships at the annual graduation ceremony at Tufts Medical Center Sackler Auditorium on June 24th.

As keynote speaker and judge of the Quincy District Court, Paul M. Yee encouraged the immigrant students to pursue the path of U.S. citizenship.

“All of you work so hard to be here. I know it’s not easy, especially for those of you who have arrived in the United States recently—once becoming a citizen, you can vote. You can participate. I know it’s difficult. All of you have done difficult things and sacrificed to be sitting in this room with your fellow graduates. When you are involved in our democracy, you will open to, and be ready for the opportunities and everything the United States has to offer you,” Yee said.

Yee, who grew up in Boston China-town, recalled going to AACA with his mother when she was laid off from a garment factory decades ago. “It’s homecoming for me, as you know. I have been a member of AACA board of directors for a long time. It’s indeed an honor and a privilege to be here celebrating your accomplishments,” Yee said.

State legislators also offered their congratulations to the graduates. “Education is the key to ensuring that you can access vast opportunities life has to offer. You are now a role model for those who will come after you,” wrote Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz in a letter read by her assistant Sibu Malaba during the ceremony.

Deputy Director Sunny Schwartz also thanked employer partners such as Tufts Medical Center, Eastern Bank and State Street Corporation for their significant contribution. Employers offer workplace support and career advancement opportunities — all of which are critical in achieving AACA’s mission in educating, empowering and employing immigrants.

Students also spoke about their experiences in AACA’s programs. Student speaker Vance Copeland, a graduate of the Building Energy Efficient Maintenance Skills (BEEMS) was able to launch a new career through AACA. “I really didn’t have marketable skills to re-enter and start a new career path. I am a single father raising a set of twins. For me, AACA has been the difference.”

By Samuel Tsoi

Sampan Correspondent

It’s a girl! The phrase that brings joy and pride to so many couples often elicits the opposite reaction in China, where an extreme number of daughters are abandoned or aborted. The alarming trend is attributed by many to the government’s one-child policy. The weighty subject was one of conversation on June 17th at a fundraiser in Boston to support All Girls Allowed (AGA) which has to offer you,” Yee said.

Yee, who grew up in Boston China-town, recalled going to AACA with his mother when she was laid off from a garment factory decades ago. “It’s homecoming for me, as you know. I have been a member of AACA board of directors for a long time. It’s indeed an honor and a privilege to be here celebrating your accomplishments,” Yee said.

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By Diana Li

Sampan Correspondent

Gee How Oak Tin Association Scholarship Reception

Gee How Oak Tin Association (GHOT) of New England held their 2nd annual scholarship reception for young children at their headquarters on 77 Harrison Avenue in Boston on July 2, 2011.

To be eligible for the scholarship, recipients have to have a surname of Chan, Chin, Chen, Tran, Wu, Woo, or Yuen. Awards ranged from $120 - $40. To promote people to sign up for GHOT, award amounts were also based on membership status. Non-members of the association received 50% less than a member recipient. First, second, and third place member winners received $120, $100, and $80, respectively. First, second, and third place non-member winners received $60, $50, and $20, respectively.

In addition to this scholarship for children, GHOT hosts a scholarship event for college students at their Annual Mid-Autumn/General Assembly banquet in the fall. For more information on how to apply or join GHOT, please visit http://home.comcast.net/~ghot/site/?/home/.
6 Fort Street Apartments Accepting Applications Now

Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC)'s 6 Fort Street Apartments is the conversion of old Saint Paul's Methodist Church and the former Adams Park office building into 34 unique and contemporary residences in Quincy Center. The attractive location is within walking distance of local shops, schools, churches, transportation and more. The units are fully appointed and entirely affordable. Be one of the first to occupy these new homes! You can pick up your application for the lottery in person at 6 Fort Street, Quincy, MA 02169 from Wednesday, June 22 through Friday, July 1. Completed applications for inclusion in the lottery must be received by 5pm on Friday, July 1, 2011.

26 units will be offered at discounted rents through lottery:
- One-Bedrooms from $835/month (7 units)*
- Two-Bedrooms from $1,000/month (17 units)*
- Three-Bedrooms from $1,160/month (2 units)*
*Rent includes Heat, HW, Water & Sewer (tenant responsible for electric & cooling)

Please see attached for more information or visit 6FortStreetApartments.com. For inquiries, please call Maloney Properties Inc at 617-209-5401.

Homebuying Workshop

Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC)'s upcoming classes will provide a comprehensive overview of the homebuying process, from choosing a loan to closing on a home. Topics include financing options, finding a home, legal issues and home inspection. Graduates will receive a certificate required for affordable housing lotteries, special loan and assistance programs, as well as free affordable homeownership listings and individual housing counseling.

Date: July 30 and 31, 2011 Saturday and Sunday Time: 9:30am to 3:00pm Venue: ACDC, 38 Oak Street, Boston, MA 02111 RSVP: Pre-registration is required. Please email chop@asiancdc.org or contact Alex Zhang, ACDC’s Housing Counselor, at 617-482-2380 ext 208.
South Cove Expands in Quincy for Growing Asian Population

By Annie Dan Yang-Perez
Sampan Correspondent

QUINCY, MA - South Cove Community Health Center is expanding its facilities in Quincy to better serve the region’s fast-growing Asian population. A new building will arise on 88 Holmes Street, Quincy (corner of Holmes and Burgess Streets), right next to its existing 435 Hancock Street address. The groundbreaking ceremony took place on the morning of Thursday, June 30, 2011, and was graced by Quincy Mayor Thomas P. Koch and other long-time supporters of the institution.

South Cove’s decision to expand is to recognize Quincy’s rapidly growing Asian population and a consequently even larger demand for multi-cultural medical services beyond the means of the current Hancock Street clinic. With a higher-than-average Asian population, Quincy could now be seeing an influx of people out of poverty and raising living standards of urban middle class. Increasingly, the one-child policy is criticized for undermining social and economical stability, let alone being responsible human rights violations.

In the most populous country on earth, there are now 120 boys born for every 100 girls. That translates into a million more boys born each year and 37 million more men than women in total – equivalent to the entire US population of young men, or a country the size of Canada populated exclusively by young males. “When I was volunteering at an orphanage in China, I found an overwhelming majority of the children were girls – I was heartbroken,” lamented Brian Lee, Executive Director of AGA.

The collateral damage adds more dimensions to this severe gender imbalance in China: one million infants abandoned per year, 70,000 trafficked per year, 35,000 forced-abortions take place every day, and 500 women commit suicide every day (five times global average).

Globally, gender imbalance is seen in former Soviet Union states and Asia, even in the most industrialized societies such as Singapore and South Korea. The most acute trends remain in India and China, where Nobel economics laureate Amartya Sen calls Asia’s “missing women.” As these trends reach adulthood, the dearth of brides leaves a bachelor generation. These single men, also known as “bare branches” (棍子) in China, are speculated to have deep implications and disturbance in areas from human trafficking, to public health, to national security.

South Cove Community Health Center is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all medically underserved in Massachusetts with a special focus on Asian Americans. This mission is accomplished by providing high-quality community-based health care and health promotion programs that are accessible, linguistically and culturally competent for these populations. More information about South Cove Community Health Center is available at www.scchc.org.

That tipping point is not at all guaranteed. “[AGA’s mission] is a David versus Goliath fight,” said David Aikman, the evening’s keynote speaker. The award-winning author and former TIME Magazine Beijing Bureau Chief witnessed the audacity of Chi Ling, who sustained the same spirit of activism in her Tiananmen Movement days plus her newfound Christian calling to address the suffering of women and girls.

“Our mission is really to bring God’s love to where the victims are most vulnerable and violated...through the process even to the perpetrators, the policymakers and enforcers,” Chi Ling said.

“Signs of changing mores are evident in AGA’s field work. Operating in provinces and villages with the highest son-to-daughter ratio, AGA is beginning to see families begin to desire baby girls through its Baby Shower Gift program that helps expecting mothers through educational and financial support in giving birth to and raising healthy and cherished daughters. AGA also funds scholarships for abandoned girls, legal aid and counseling for mothers, and has started to reunite trafficked girls with their families.

In the public education front, gender-cide might be able to bridge the polarized divide on abortion and women’s rights. “We believe [AGA’s focus on gendercide] can help unite both sides, since women's organizations, pro-life leaders and pro-choice groups agree about the girl’s and happiness, life and health,” said Tessa Dale, AGA’s Communications Director. “This is not a question of debate for the two sides – coerced, selective abortions of girls are something everybody is willing to work together to end.”

In that hope of a more united public effort and critical programs on the ground, AGA also seeks to kindle a critical mass of Asian Americans or Chinese diaspora around the world to raise awareness within their communities. “Gender ratios are most imbalanced in Asian American communities in the US than any other US communities...volunteers who speak Chinese are especially needed in this work to help expose problems on behalf of our friends in China,” said Dale. “We hope to see more Asian Americans help end this horrible problem in ways that no other group can.”
So, you’re thinking about retiring!

By Michael Tow
Sampan Contributor

After many years in the workforce, you’re thinking about retiring. Congratulations! Most people think only the thing to consider before retiring is figuring out how much money they will need and how many assets and income they have to pay for it. However, there are a lot more things besides the finances to take into account as you make this decision. Here are a few additional things to consider before taking the big plunge!

What will you do?
Taking a break and doing nothing but relaxing may sound good right now, but after a few months it may become monotonous. Consider new activities. You have to be mentally ready to not go into the office anymore. You need to have something to replace the time that you spent working, such as a hobby, doing volunteer work, taking an adult education class or finding a part-time job. When you stop working, work-related social activities and regular socializing with co-workers often stop as well. It can be a difficult transition. Finding a good hobby, like golf or volunteering at a local charity organization, can be a great new thing to focus on.

Where will you live?
While you may want to stay in your home, now that you will no longer be tied to your job, you may decide to move. Some retirees downsize into a smaller home or condo or others relocate to another part of the country, where the cost of living is lower. Many retirees who do stay in their current home become snowbirds and move to warmer climates for the winter and never shovel snow again, while some choose to move closer to their children.

Consider the effect on your spouse
Retirement may change your relationship with your spouse. Your spouse may already be at home. If that’s the case, a couple being together all day every day could be wonderful, but it could also cause friction if they’re unprepared for it.

If your spouse is still working, what was distributed as household duties and responsibilities may have to be revised. Either way, the current arrangement that you have will have to change. Having a discussion with your spouse about the day to day changes could help prepare you both for your retirement step.

I have a client of mine whose husband had just retired. She had taken care of all the cooking and household duties for 40 years, while he worked and everything was fine. It wasn’t until after he retired, that he started telling her that she was doing things wrong. Her favorite complaint of his was when he told her she was buying the wrong kind of tomatoes at the grocery store!

Do a trial run.
Retirement these days does not always have to be an all or nothing decision. One option is to take a gradual step by reducing your hours to part time. This will make the transition easier and you may also be able to keep your health insurance. Another option to see if you’re ready for retirement is to arrange for an extended vacation or a leave of absence. You may find that you are ready for retirement after all or that you would like to go back to work but doing something completely different.

If you have a question or topic that you would like me to discuss in a future article please email me at mtow@newbostonfinancial.com.

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ Michael Tow can be reached at 617-734-4400 or www.newbostonfinancial.com.
"Diamond and Damion"

By Sharldine Desire
Sampan Youth Writer

CHAPTER 4: DI

"Dami, what are you talking about? You know nothing can be done for her now," Diamond shook her head at me, her shiny curls gently brushing her face.

I moved closer to her and lowered my voice. "Remember in school, Di, when we were learning about the lizards? They said that the antidote could only be found in an exotic flower that scientists found years ago."

"Yes, but it also said that that flower was basically wiped of the planet years and years ago. No one knows if it even exists anymore, or even if it did, where on earth would they look to find it?" Di's eyes were guarded; she wasn't letting me see what truly lay beneath her doubt. I could tell she wasn't allowing not even a bit of hope to enter her heart, for the agony of being wrong would be more than she could take. I wanted to grab her hands and cool her down so she could listen to me, but I had to settle for my voice.

Her composure melted and she smiled almost sadly, shaking her head at me again. "Dami, I'll always believe you. You have no reason to lie to me, and I have every reason to trust in you." She paused, then said encouragingly. "Tell me."

So, I did. I told her about the camping trip my uncle and I took two years ago and of the amazing discovery we made...

When my uncle and I had gone camp- ing a couple years ago, we came upon a cave. Curious, we went inside and found the impossible. Hundreds of shelves lined the walls, filled with bottles and jars from the very ceiling to the floor. My uncle noticed that the containers all had labels, and when we first beheld the words upon them, we could not help but doubt. They were remedies to all sorts of different things; from conditions as harmless as the common cold to illnesses as deadly as cancer. We refused to believe it, but when I came across a bottle labeled "common cuts" and poured a small amount on a deep wound I had received the day before, our opinions immediately changed. The cut disappeared almost instantly!

We stared in wonder at the contain- ers with new eyes and I couldn't help but see the advantages of the place on human kind. But my uncle was sure that it would be used unjustly, and insisted that the place was just unnatural. Therefore, we swore not to tell a soul, figuring that we'd leave the reveal to the next discoverer who would take much; I had already raided my own luggage and hoping that it would not be wrong- fully used. I've never been there since and didn't think I'd have to, until Daisy...

When I came to the end of my tale, Di's brown eyes were staring at me. In them, I saw the struggle of believing me. "Dami and I are going to find Daisy. Don't worry about us, we'll be fine. Sorry to leave like this, but we've got to try. I Love You. Diamond*"

I read the sadness in her eyes as she left her family behind. When we got to her front porch, I looked out into the dark- ness of the night and turned to her. I lit the lanterns so I could clearly read her face. "Diamond," I began. She looked at me, confused. "You trust me, right?"

She seemed kind of surprised and her eyes didn't hide it. She showed a small smile. "More than anyone else in the entire world," she said. "Dami...sometimes I trust you more than I trust myself. Like right now. She smiled wider and looked at me with those beautiful brown eyes...I never wanted to hug her so badly in my life."

"Me too," I told her, "That's all we need. We can do this Di, we have to."

"For Daisy," she said, eyes welling up. "Yeah," I whispered, "for Daisy."

Then with our bags on our backs and hearts filled with hope and trust and cour- age and love, we began the journey that changed our lives forever.

TO BE CONTINUED...

The Haven
-a little piece of Scotland

By Anna Ing
Sampan Contributor

Open for a year, The Haven (2 Perkins Street, Jamaica Plain, MA (617) 524-2836, located in Jamaica Plain's Hyde Square, has been bringing Caledonian food to this gastropub in a city overrun by Irish pubs. The simple menu does consist of a lot of fried items, but it varies every so often. This hotspot serves Scottish craft beers, house made cuisine by Chef Wax and has live music!

First off is oat cakes (delicious bread with hints of honey) served with butter and house made pickled vegetables to nibble on. The appetizer portion of the famous Haggis and Neeps ($9) (sauces with offal (entrails and innards), spices, and herbs) has a distinctive nutty flavor that is not for the faint hearted. It is served over a tasty honey, truffle mashed rutabaga (Swedish yellow turnips) and Drambuie (malt whiskey flavored with honey and herbs) butter. Haggis is always served every January 25th on a Scottish Holiday to celebrate Scotland's favorite son and national poet Robert Burns (aka Robbie Burns), who also wrote "Auld Lang Syne"

Next came the Scotch Deviled Egg $8 (commonly served with salad and pickles) which consisted of one egg, deep fried and cut in half, wrapped with ground sausage meat and filled with deviled egg accompa- nied by a simple, lightly dressed arugula salad served with a lovely spicy yellow mustard for a nice kick.

The main entree was the Sausitch and Mash $18; A Hunter's Sausage and Yukon potato mash with bits of skin, herbs along with roasted celery (root vegetable) and onion jus. The sausage was not overly salty and tasted delicious with the lovely green celery (celery root) and potato mash.

A very non Scottish dessert is the chocolate bread pudding served with an original flour topped with coconut curry ice cream. Surprisingly, the coconut curry ice cream served as a lovely contrast to the balanced bread pudding which was not overly dry but moist. If you want to try haggis without traveling to Scotland, The Haven is the place to go!
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Massachusetts DREAMin’

By Samuel Tsoi
Sampan Contributor

Last month, Democratic Senators re-introduced the decade-old DREAM Act, a legislation that would offer legal status to eligible undocumented immigrants who were brought into the country as minors. The decade-old bill narrowly failed to overcome a filibuster last December, after passing the House of Representatives – the furthest the bill has ever reached. The political prospects of its passage this time around are dim unless it is a bipartisan effort. Nevertheless, the urgency and needs of thousands of students loom larger than ever. This population of DREAMers, which argues many advocates, educators and businesspeople, is the most deserving group of a pathway toward citizenship and a chance to contribute to a country they already belong to.

Take the story of Jose. The Filipino-born Pulitzer-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas recently “came out” with an article on the New York Times on his journey as an undocumented immigrant. Jose was never told about his status until his attempt at getting a driver’s license as a teenager. Since then, a team educators, counselors, and friends became what he called his “personal underground railroad” helping him succeed throughout countless obstacles. [“Even with all these achievements, I am still an undocumented immigrant… It means going about my day in fear of being found out. It means rarely trusting people, even those closest to me, with who I really am. It means keeping my family photos in a shoebox rather than displaying them on shelves in my home so friends don’t ask about them. It means reluctantly, even painfully, doing things I know are wrong and unlawful,” Jose recounted.]

An American in every way except for his lack of papers, Jose is just one of many (estimated two million young adults and teenagers) who are striving for the American Dream, who know no other home, but are stuck in immigration limbo. The gridlock in Washington has only produced rhetoric. Many Republicans are demanding more enforcement even as billions of tax-dollars have been spent on border security. Some are even suggesting overturning bedrock constitutional rights such as birthright citizenship. Meanwhile, Democrats are criticized for paying only lip-service at best and using immigration as campaign tools at worst. All the while, being the party responsible for record numbers of deportations.

Advocates are now asking President Obama to halt deportations on DREAMers and other non-criminal immigrants, which are the overwhelming majority of undocumented immigrants. But with the newly-graduated class of 2011 comes another summer without the DREAM Act or real relief for these aspiring young Americans. In this state, we do not have to leave these students behind, many of whom high-achieving, do not qualify for most financial aid, but want to contribute fully to the Commonwealth.

Currently, Massachusetts’ public colleges and universities require these students, albeit graduates of local high schools, to pay the often unaffordable out-of-state tuition. A bill before the State House would change that.

Unfortunately, misconceptions and outright denial of facts are still rampant in the media, ranging from portray ing in-state tuition as a “handout” or scholarship, to undocumented students “jumping the line” – claims which echo the larger immigration debate. While some Massachusetts state legislators might give in to those emotionally-charged and exclusionary claims, others can find the real policy impacts to have net-benefits for all parties involved – or simply acknowledge the humane and just treatment these young people deserve.

Allowing these students to pay in-state tuition does not take away “seats” of other students since they are admitted and enrolled like any other student. Secondly, these students still would not be eligible for federal grants and loans, let alone any state-funded aid – but are given the equal chance to pay the same rate as those they graduated high school with. Lastly, studies have shown that graduates of Massachusetts public colleges are far more likely to stay (work, invest, pay taxes) in Massachusetts, not to mention the millions of additional tuition revenue otherwise lost according to the Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation.

Finally, in-state tuition would pave the way for these students to be DREAM Act-eligible, until the “adults” in Congress get their act together.

This week, neighboring Connecticut will enact an in-state law, following a dozen other states including conservative legislatures such as Texas and Utah. There is no reason why Massachusetts (a state known of education) cannot offer education equality in this regard. Our students need not languish for another year of educational purgatory. Passing in-state tuition will demonstrate that investing in these young people will benefit states blue or red and urge politicians across the aisle to do what’s right for the future.

Get Involved in Your NEWSPAPER!

SAMPAN is seeking community correspondents, photographers, translators and columnists to help us provide coverage of major events and happenings in the Asian American community in Metro Boston. We are especially seeking Malden and Quincy correspondents to help us stay connected with these communities. Ideal candidates should have an interest in writing or/and reporting. We welcome students, working professionals, stay-at-home parents, retirees and all others who are interested in Asian-American affairs.

- Event Reporting
- Event Announcements
- Event Photos
- Translation
- Opinion

Anyone interested in contributing to SAMPAN should e-mail recruit@sampan.org.
By Candice Montalvo
Sampan Correspondent

Many Bostonians tend to think of Chinatown as a commercial hub, a place to get dim sum, dumplings, and cheap imported goods. But next time you walk through the streets of Chinatown, look up. Above the restaurants and storefronts of the 300 plus businesses are the apartments of some of the 6,000 plus people who call Boston’s Chinatown home.

On Saturday May 7, I participated in a walking tour of Chinatown that was designed to share more about the lesser known historical and residential side of Chinatown. “By giving these tours, we are helping maintain the history [of Chinatown],” said Cherry Lim, tour guide and intern for the Asian Community Development Corporation. The tour was sponsored by MetroFuture of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in collaboration with Chinatown based organizations Asian Voices of Organized Youth for Community Empowerment (AVOYCE), the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC) and the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC).

The tour covered 11 culturally significant sites in Chinatown and a narration of the growth, struggles, and perseverance of this community. With burgeoning Chinese communities cropping up in Quincy and elsewhere in the Greater Boston area, this tour helped to illuminate how the history and culture of Chinatown play a role in its continued relevance and importance for Chinese in Boston today.

The first stop on our tour was the affordable housing complex Tai Tung Village, which means “the great similarity” in Chinese. The average household income in Chinatown is about $15,000 per year, making the subsidized apartments of Tai Tung extremely popular. Despite having only a single elevator for the entire complex, there is an 18 year waiting list for those seeking housing here, said Lim.

Our second stop was the Old Josiah Quincy School on Tyler Street. Opened in 1847, it was one of the oldest public schools in the country and the first to break away from the “one-room school house” tradition, offering separate classrooms for each grade level. The school relocated to Washington Street in 1976 and the old building is currently used to hold Chinese classes for Chinese-American children to learn Chinese language and culture. “This was my equivalent of Sunday school,” said Lim, a former Chinese-school student here.

Next, we viewed a few of the remaining family associations. Before non-profits, the associations used to provide many services to immigrants such as employment and housing placements. They were tradition ally segregated by family name or village. While, these services have now been replaced by the many non-profits operating in Chinatown, the associations still serve as a site for social gatherings.

Our fourth stop was the controversial Parcel 24 on Hudson Street. This was once a lively residential street lined with brick buildings until the 1960s, when one half of the street was “reclaimed” by the state in order to build an on-ramp to I-93. Now, several decades later and post Big Dig, that half of the street lays vacant, but it has recently been approved for new mixed-income housing condos in the coming years. It remains to be seen whether Hudson Street will be revived after construction of the new housing.

Also situated on Hudson Street is the Chinese Merchants’ Building, or more specifically, two thirds of the building. The posterior third was removed to make room for the same on-ramp that took out half of Hudson Street’s apartments. Built with money from local Chinese businessmen, this building was once considered a jewel of the neighborhood. Now the building is rumored to be “cursed” after several failed attempts by restaurants and other businesses to succeed here.

The Chinatown gate, a hallmark of Boston’s Chinatown, was actually a gift from the government of Taiwan. It is one of several “paifang” arches given by the Taiwanese government to Chinatowns around the U.S.

A graffiti-tagged and unkempt parking lot called Ping On Alley is actually the birthplace of Boston’s Chinatown, though there is no obvious monument or plaque to denote it as such. Chinese workers moved eastward when the completion of the transcontinental railroad offered factory jobs in Western Massachusetts during the strike. After the strike was over, they took the train as far east as possible and landed in South Station. This group of men pitched tents in Ping On Alley and Chinatown was born.

Lim then showed us a tiny alley on Ox Street that was one of the few affordable areas for new immigrants, including refugees from Vietnam, to open businesses. New restaurants and other redevelopment efforts in the ‘90s eventually helped change the face and character of the neighborhood. This area remains the only zoned adult entertainment district in Boston, though only two strip clubs still remain.

Our tour concluded at Parcel C with an uplifting story about how community activism prevented Tufts from building a parking garage on this land. Tufts owns about 30 percent of the area of Chinatown and most of its buildings are not open to the community. Though its relationship with the Chinatown community has improved in recent years, some say there is still more progress to be made. With the support of the ACDC and Mayor Menino, Chinatown protesters were able regain the property from Tufts. The land was used to construct a mixed-income, multi-purpose building. It houses four non-profits, including the ACDC, and has function rooms available for community events. In front, there is an even small playground and green space, a rare commodity in Chinatown. The ability of the community to rise up and oppose the construction of another parking garage represented “the culmination of all the struggles Chinatown has faced,” said Lim. “A lot of things would have changed had this been a garage,” she added.

Perhaps the most transformed area of Chinatown is the Washington Street corridor. In the past, high crime, prostitution and drug trafficking earned this street its infamous nickname, “The Combat Zone.” “When I was little, my parents would not let me come over here,” said Lim. Due to its undesirable location, Washington Street was one of the few affordable areas for new immigrants, including refugees from Vietnam, to open businesses. New restaurants and other redevelopment efforts in the ‘90s eventually helped change the face and character of the neighborhood. This area remains the only zoned adult entertain ment district in Boston, though only two strip clubs still remain.

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