

32nd Annual High School Achievement Awards Banquet successfully held on December 6, 2015 at ACA's Chinese Community Center

Article by Shung H. (Sue) Sung

Back in 1984, to recognize excellent students pursuing higher education, the Association of Chinese Americans (ACA) board led by **Roland Hwang** established a high school achievement scholarship program. Many caring ACA members made donations to set up the scholarship funds and still fund raise even now. As time went by, applications from Chinese American students increased and the workload for the scholarship committee became much complex. Thanks to the experienced ACA Scholarship Committee (**Angela Wang Beasinger, Roland Hwang, Angelina Chin, Gracia Lee and Lucy King**), the committee works with school counselors to participate in the recommendation process to nominate excellent students. **Wendy Ma** and **ZiFeng Nie** from the **Detroit Chinese Engineers Association (DCEA)** also participated in the process to select the best students for the DCEA scholarships based on their criteria.

ACA's 32nd Annual High School Achievement Awards Banquet was held on December 6, 2015, at the ACA's Chinese Community Center with 62 guests in attendance. After a delicious Chinese dinner, the keynote speech was given by the 6th District **State Representative Stephanie Chang**. She congratulated all the honorees and their parents for reaching this point and encouraged the students to actively participate, learn teamwork, and build trust in their personal experiences. She emphasized to the young soon-to-be graduates, to focus not just on academic achievement, but to establish a good foundation by building up their skills, their networking, and developing trust, and a devotion to serve. In their life, they may encounter future challenges and risks during their studies and career transition process. Courage, patience and support from family, peers, and co-workers are needed to move forward.

State Representative Chang described her background, experiences growing up, and finally her recent win of a Michigan state representative seat as the first Asian American female elected to the state legislature. She is the second generation of Chinese immigrants from Taiwan. Instead of giving in to typical Asian parent expectations to study law school, she followed her passion as a civic advocate and was actively involved in voting rights during the 2010 census registration. She co-founded and is a past President of Asian Pacific American Vote-Michigan, where she collaborated with many Asian ethnic groups to address their civic concerns as well as others. Her connections, openness, and trust during her outreach to the community also opened the door for her to run for the congressional representative seat. It was a big risk for her as a very young, female Asian American to run in a majority African American district, but she beat the odds. With minimum financial resources and with mainly volunteer support from the community, she won the state representative seat in 2013. As State Representative, she has endorsed and passed several legislative bills that support the community needs in safety, education, and other areas.

After the speech, each student was introduced by Roland Hwang and praised for their academic achievements and community service excellence with an honoree certificate. There were a total of 26 Chinese American honor students from twelve high schools in the Metro Detroit area nominated by their school counselor based on their outstanding academic grades, community service, and other criteria. The names of the honoree students and their respective schools are: ten from Troy High School: **Angela Chen, Eric Cheng, Cindy Chu, Ingrid Fan, Amy Li, Lucy Li, Krystal Qin, Jennie Yang, Andrew Yuan, Winston Zhang**; three from Detroit County Day

School: **Alan Sun, Claire Wang, Lydia Wang**; three from Northville High School: **Jonathan Bi, Yannis Bi, Robert Hong**; two from Canton High School: **Jason Ren, Howard Zhang**; one from Adlai E. Stevenson High School: **Jason Li**; one from Utica Center of Math, Science and Technology: **Christina Li**; one from Plymouth High School: **Alex Sheng**; one from Ann Arbor Pioneer High School: **Brian Guo**; one from Huron High School: **Deana Zhu**; one from De LaSalle Collegiate High School: **Haotian Li**; one from Okemos High School: **Jessica Yen**; one International Academy Okma Campus: **Vivian Xu**.

The Class of 2016 scholarship recipients are:

ACA Best All Around (\$1,000) **Claire Wang** (Detroit County Day School);

ACA Outstanding Award (\$500) **Jason Li** (Adlai E. Stevenson High School);

ACA Community Service (\$500/each) **Alan Sun** (Detroit Country Day School) and **Angela Chen** (Troy High School);

Mabel Peng Memorial Scholarship (\$500) **Winston Zhang** (Troy High School);

Acacia 168 (\$1,000) **Lydia Wang** (Detroit Country Day School);

The Acacia 168 Scholarship is donated by **Dr. Tai Chan** and awarded to a student interested in environmental sciences.

P. L. Siak Scholarship(\$1,000) **Ingrid Fan** (Troy High School);

The P. L. Scholarship is awarded to a student who has overcome major difficulties in life, such as a physical disability, or constraints, or major illness for an extended period of time to reach academic achievements.

DCEA Scholarships (\$500/each) **Christina Li** (Utica Center for Math, Science and Technology) and **Jason Ren** (Canton High School).

The DCEA scholarships are awarded to outstanding students interested in engineering and will be awarded at DCEA's Annual meeting next year.

Scholarship donors **Dr. Steve Peng** and **Dr. John Siak** attended and presented their funded scholarships to the recipients. Other attendees included: DCEA Tech Council Chair **Zifeng Nie**; ACA Executive Director **Shenlin Chen**; ACA President **Bernard Wong**; ACA Board members **Roland Hwang, Angela Wang, Eric Chau** and **Sue Sung**; ACA staff and volunteers **Shirley Yee, Joyce Li, Shirley Siak, Tina Hwang, David Liou, Lijun Chen, and Teyang Soong**. Student counselor and past ACA President **Richard Mui** also attended the event. Many thanks to all the students, their parents, and friends who came to recognize the 2016 graduates!!



Keynote speaker- State Representative Stephanie Chang



Class of 2016 ACA Scholarship Award Event



Class of 2016 ACA Scholarship Honorees with donors, sponsors, and ACA Board

First Row (L-R): Eric Chau, Steven Peng, John Siak, Bernard Wong, Richard Mui, Sue Sung, Roland Hwang, Stephanie Chang, Zifeng Nie, Shenlin Chen, Angela Wang Beasinger.

2nd Row (L-R): Jason Ren*, Howard Zhang, Winston Zhang*, Alex Sheng, Alan Sun*, Brian Guo, Jason Li*, Eric Cheng, Robert Hong, Andrew Yuan, Alex Sheng, Jonathan Bi, Yannis Bi.

3rd Row (L-R): Haotian Li, Lucy Li, Ingrid Fan*, Deanna Zhu, Jessica Yen, Lydia Wang*, Cindy Chu, Jennie Yang, Christina Li*, Amy Li, Angela Chen*.

No pictured: Claire Wang*, Krystal Qin, and Vivian Xu.

(*Scholarship Recipient)