

## OASES

Executive director H. Nhi Chau has led Oakland Asian Students Educational Services (OASES) for more than four years; however, her connection to the youth development organization goes back much further. OASES, an educational services and social support organization for youth living in Oakland's Chinatown, addresses recent immigration issues, access to English language instruction, poverty cycles and gang violence.

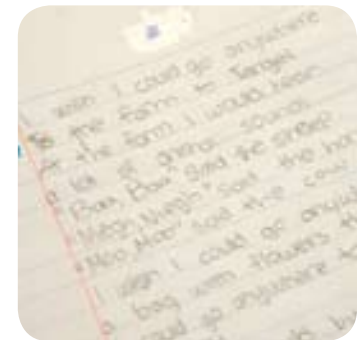
Nhi, an alumna and past OASES volunteer and board member, is a manifestation of the organization's success in providing more than 25 years of youth programming. Now charged with the task of continuing OASES' mission to empower and maximize the potential of Asian youth, Nhi is "humbled" by the students she works for. "I am them and they are me," she explains.

OASES began in 1983 as a service club at University of California, Berkeley. In 1991 the club evolved into a nonprofit that now serves

more than 400 students. With a highly effective recruitment and training model, OASES is composed of 400 volunteers providing tutoring and enrichment services to predominantly Asian-American youth from immigrant families.

While all students receive academic support, enrichment activities differ for each grade level. Elementary students are exposed to activities like arts and sports to help cultivate their talents and interests. Middle school students focus on identity issues intrinsic to their stage of development, such as their role and impact in the community and the celebration of their ethnic identity. Skill-building activities for high school students concentrate on college preparation, career readiness and financial literacy.

"Strengthening family is a common thread throughout all of our programs," says Nhi. Recently, OASES began teaching parents education policy. "Some parents may not be registered voters but



can still voice their opinion on policies that affect their families. And navigating through a school system is tough, especially for our students who come from working-class, immigrant families.”

Like Nhi, a Berkeley and Harvard graduate, many students benefiting from OASES’ services have become volunteers and staff members. “We invest in the training of our staff and volunteers, stressing the importance of choosing a profession in youth development,” says Nhi. “Working for a nonprofit isn’t just a ‘gig.’”

OASES celebrated its 25th anniversary in May 2008 with a community event bringing together alumni volunteers, past and present staff, parents and students from the greater Oakland community. With a grant from The Clorox Company Foundation, OASES will provide 80 youth with individualized support and continue to shape Oakland’s future community leaders.

