

Dear CASL Family and Friends...

After 38 years, I am writing my last message to you, as now I am an official retiree. As I was cleaning out my office, I reflected on the many framed pictures adorning my office walls. They tell a long and fruitful story about how the Chinese American Service League began in the back of a dentist's office and became a beacon of hope for over 11,000 Chinese Americans and Chinese Immigrants every year.

The pictures also tell a story of the countless people that provided vital support to CASL over the decades, as well as the amazing mentorship I have received from many of you—including my fellow founders, board members, staff both past and present, donors, our community, and partner organizations. Your friendship, wisdom, an advocacy of CASL—as well as my growth as a leader—have been instrumental in our success.

I have been incredibly blessed to lead CASL for almost four decades. As a Catholic, such met my spiritual calling to help those less fortunate. As an immigrant, it is gratifying to know I did my share to fight for the benefits of my community. As a social worker, I am happy to have secured valuable resources and relationships for our community. This has indeed been my dream job, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

As CASL moves forward into its next stage of service to the community, I leave behind a dedicated and accomplished board, loyal leadership staff, and a passionate CASL family that I have every confidence in. My wish is that you continue to show the same level of support and commitment to CASL and its next leader. You are what makes CASL a beacon within Chinatown, Chicago, and the Midwest. Continue to feed that light so that it may grow and shine ever more brightly!

All the best,



Bernie Wong

Co-Founder and Retired CASL President



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CASL Leadership Transition Update...

Stronger than ever before, we embrace exciting changes!

Esther Wong

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As many of you know, I continue to serve as Executive Director during this transition, and have assumed the duties of the CEO as well. CASL's leadership team has also stepped up as planned, and has assumed additional duties to ensure that we continue to run smoothly.

As CASL moves forward in our search for our next leader, DHR International has been working diligently to source potential candidates from all over North America, and has begun conducting first-round interviews that include candidate leadership assessments. At the same time, CASL's leadership staff have been working to prepare the team for this transition.

Experience + Emotional Intelligence = Excellence

Research shows that 54% of an individual's workplace persona is easily measurable and is the focus of decisions to hire candidates. This includes variables like education, experience, and skill sets. The other 46% constitutes workplace behavior and communication style. With CASL's family-like work culture, we recognize that 54% isn't enough to create a strong leadership team. For us, the ability to connect and nurture people of all kinds is a crucial skill for our CEO and leadership team to have.

On to Phase Two

Extensive work has been done, and will continue to be done, during this transition process to address the other 46% and strengthen CASL's entire leadership team. CASL's three directors, four program managers, and myself have been working with The Oliver Group to assess our workplace characteristics, identify our individual and group strengths and challenges, and improve communications among the team members. In addition, we brought together our entire supervision team in a full day retreat to discuss change management.

The first phase of that work has been completed, and we now prepare to move into phase two. This phase will focus on implementing the knowledge gained from the insightful trainings and in-depth analysis to improve the overall effectiveness of the team. In addition, those assessments are also being carried out on CEO candidates. Both sets of assessments will be used in the search process to create an ideal match—not just in experience and credentials, but in character and workplace behavior.

In the meantime, the CASL Family can count on me for strong leadership and unwavering support as we forge ahead into an innovative and bright future!

Cooking Up a Career

Chef Training Program ♦ Stacy_Huang@CASLservice.org ♦ 312.791.0418 x3611

Pamela Estwick was born and raised on the south side of Chicago. Armed with a Bachelor's Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management, she has spent over a decade in Project and Communications Management roles. But eventually the call of the kitchen led Pamela to CASL's Chef Training Program and the education she needed for an exciting new life in the culinary world. During her very first visit to CASL, Pamela felt a connection and knew that the program was the right education for her!

What were the most exciting aspects of being a student in the Chef Training Program?

The most exciting things were learning about the food of different cultures, exploring new flavors, and learning techniques for being a neat and organized cook. I also made some friends in the program and got to know people from backgrounds that were much different than mine. I truly looked forward to being in the kitchen and learning something new every day from my dedicated and amazing teachers.

What was one of the most useful techniques you learned?

Learning the technique and history of making soups, stocks, and sauces made the deepest connection with me. After picking up a book called *The Saucier's Apprentice* at the recommendation of Chef Instructor John Claybrooke, things seemed to open up for me in a different way. I find myself at home now making soups a few times a week. The delicate balance between salt, fat/butter, and herbs can take a regular dish and make it taste extraordinary.



What advice can you give those entering CASL's Chef Training Program?

Take very good notes, keep an open mind, be ready to explore a new lifestyle—the life of a cook/chef is much different than any other field you may have been in previously. The program changed my life and took me from an office worker to a full time cook in a very short amount of time. I'm very grateful for that. I had excellent teachers and support at CASL. I'm so very glad that I have the foundation of what I learned at CASL. I would not be employed or surviving at work without that knowledge.

Posse Scholarships Awarded to CASL Youth

High School Youth Program ♦ Kevin_Kwong@CASLservice.org ♦ 312.791.0418 x3602

Since 1989, the Posse Foundation has identified public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential, and has given these students the opportunity to pursue personal and academic excellence by placing them in supportive, multicultural teams—"posses". Advancement through the competition leads to intensive leadership activities in Posse groups, and then a final selection of Posse Scholar awardees. Upon months of student evaluation, Posse partner colleges and universities select "Posse Scholars" to receive four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.

Out of 2,800 Chicago-area nominees for 2016, 120 students were awarded—including Ming Tao Chen and Aiping Li of CASL's High School Youth Program.



Ming Tao Chen (left) has been ranked first in his grade since his freshman year at Thomas Kelly High School, and is an esteemed member of the National Honor Society. He will be attending Denison University and studying mathematics and economics.

Aiping Li (right) is the secretary of the Student Council and the treasurer of the National Honor Society at Curie Metropolitan High School. She is also a member of the Senior Executive Board and the National Chinese Honor Society. She will be attending DePauw University and studying economics.

"In 2011 and 2014, CASL's High School Youth Program congratulated our own students as Posse Scholarship recipients. For 2016 we congratulate Ming Tao Chen and Aiping Li as recipients who demonstrate the exceptional leadership skills and academic excellence our High School Youth Program advocates." —Kevin Kwong, Youth Development Program Coordinator

Pizza Party with the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation

Foundation and Corporate Giving ♦ Dustin_Quebedeaux@CASLservice.org

Over the holidays, members of the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation learned hands-on what it's like to be students of CASL's unique Chef Training Program—by taking a pizza-making class! As a longtime funder of the program, the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation enjoyed seeing, experiencing, *and* tasting how their funding has helped thousands of culinary jobseekers learn not only hard skills in the kitchen, but also skills in communication, marketing, and landing the jobs of their dreams. Thank you Lloyd A. Fry Foundation!

