The Impact of The Creative Studio Continues
By Sneha Shrestha ‘11

Launched in 2009, Sneha Shrestha’s Lang Project, The Creative Studio (TCS), ensures psychosocial wellbeing of vulnerable children and adults. It guides them through a creative journey based on the belief that art awakens the imagination and helps reach new possibilities and thus allows children and adults to discover the power they have within to create, by experiencing a new world through vibrant and playful methods of art and storytelling. The method that TCS follows is based upon the Peacemaker Exercises formulated by the Mumbai-based NGO Dreamcatchers Foundation, which serves as an incubator for developing programs that provide transformative experiences for children, youth and adults all over India and was Sneha’s LOS internship site. While there, Sneha was first a participant then a facilitator of the psychosocial healing curriculum which she was then certified to use in Nepal. Although initially she planned on conducting the program only with conflict-affected children, the facilitators who underwent the training felt that many adults and children of different groups could benefit vastly from the TCS programming. Thus, TCS was expanded to include a train-the-trainer model. Sneha writes, “The network of 20 trainers from 15 organizations whom I trained has had ripple effects. The Creative Studio’s programs have been implemented by trainers in Nepal and reached a variety of beneficiaries, including trafficked women, street children, prisoner’s children, Dalits, students and teachers from private schools in Kathmandu, as well as many Children and adults from rural and (cont’d on page 2)
The Impact of *The Creative Studio* (cont’d)

urban settings elsewhere in Nepal. Each one has healed, transformed and learned through The Creative Studio’s “Peacemaker Program.” [The Peacemaker Program consisted of a set of 12 core exercises which uses expressive and creative processes of art, storytelling and writing, to encourage participants to express and share their feelings, fears, dreams and aspirations with others.]

One of the participants in the group I trained was Pushpa Basnet (*pictured below, right*), founder of Kathmandu-based NGO called Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC), which works to strengthen the rights of children living behind bars with their incarcerated parents. Subsequently, **Pushpa was honored as the 2012 CNN Hero of the Year for her work with prisoner’s children.**

“Out of the 20 trainees in my Lang Project, Pushpa was the first trainee to implement The Creative Studio’s program, and one of two to take a leadership role to help continue The Creative Studio’s programs in the future.” In a recent conversation, Pushpa emphasized that “the cross-learning between organizations that The Creative Studio facilitated has created a strong support network among the trainees to date. In addition to conducting The Creative Studio’s program with prisoner’s children in her NGO, Pushpa also trained 13 kindergarten teachers at Sunrise School in Kathmandu. The school was facing tensions among teachers with a lot of backbiting and internal politics. The Creative Studio’s program provided a platform to unravel concerns and opinions of the teachers and, as a result, helped them to better understand each other.

“After the program,” writes Sneha, “Pushpa reported that there was a marked positive different in the way the teachers interacted, which in turn immensely affected the quality of teaching to the students. Due to vast applicability and important reflections sparked by The Creative Studio program, in a recent conversation with me, Pushpa said that she is excited to help extend The Creative Studio program from the development to the business realm, and conduct it among top media houses, fashion houses and businesses in Nepal.”

**About the author:** After doing management consulting in Boston for a year, Sneha is back in her home of Kathmandu, Nepal, working at a UK-based INGO called Samriddha Pahad as Strategy, Fundraising, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager. Samriddha Pahad works to improve the livelihoods of hill and mountain communities in Nepal through sustainable access to finance linked with appropriate livelihood opportunities, and local institutional strengthening.

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**Elizabeth Crow ’10** was recently accepted into medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Liz plans to pursue medical anthropology after she obtains her medical degree.

**Johanna Greeson ’97** is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Social Policy & Practice.

She writes, “I’m currently teaching Human Behavior in the Social Environment to MSW students. Our last class addresses social movements. I’m very excited to report that Cheri Honkala, social justice organizer and 2012 Vice Presidential Green Party Candidate, will be guest lecturing! Ms. Honkala is nationally and internationally respected for her anti-poverty work, particularly the work she’s conducted in her hometown of Philadelphia.

P.S. I will be actually using my Lang Project in the class that Cheri will be attending – my video about the Poor People’s Movement during 1995-1997.”

Johanna’s Lang Project, called “A Fight for Survival: Voices on Poverty,” was a 22-minute documentary which examined the role that college students can play in the anti-poverty movement. She also designed and implemented a five-lesson curriculum, which addressed issues of poverty and homelessness, as part of her Lang Project.
Fall in Love with Your Dreams
By Gloria S. Chan ’02

It’s been a decade since I graduated from Swat, and 13 years since I founded my Lang Project, which is still in existence: The Chinatown Youth Initiative in New York City. After Harvard Law School and a federal clerkship, I spent seven years in Asian American and Pacific Islander national politics. Today, I continue my service as owner of my own life & leadership coaching business – Gloria S. Chan Life & Leadership Consulting – and I absolutely love it! This decennial moment allows me to reflect on the greatest lessons that I’ve learned from life, Swat, and also from Mr. Lang’s message and legacy of social change. The coolest lesson I’ve learned has to do with love: love of self, family, community, and most important of all, love of your own dreams. Today, I help social visionaries and leaders at all stages of their careers commit to falling in love with their dreams on a daily basis.

I was born and raised in New York City. My parents, Wai Ching Chan and Wai Wah Chan, are both immigrants from Southern China. My courageous parents escaped the Cultural Revolution in their 20s by swimming to Hong Kong. They came to New York City as refugees, married and started a family soon after in Brooklyn. Through their story, I learned to love water, and port cities. They are rich with diverse stories of the many life paths of those courageous ones who are forever discovering themselves and seeking new possibilities. I guess I knew, even then, that I was inspired by those – just like you – who are seeking a fuller life.

At Swat, I studied political science, and grew my passion for diversity work, social change, and democratic inclusion. I ended up leading the charge at the Swarthmore Asian Organization, and followed the steps of leaders that came before me, particularly the class of 2000 – the Jenny Yang’s and Rodney Morris’s of the world – and led the diverse coalition of student groups then known as ADVICE (Advocating Diversity and Variety of Ideologies in the Campus Environment – that’s a mouthful!). As a coalition, we advocated diligently and aggressively for a Multicultural Dean, the position which I was happy to learn came to fruition just a few years after I graduated!

As a sophomore with a Lang Project grant, I founded Chinatown Youth Initiatives, a youth leadership nonprofit for high school students in New York City. The youth organization is currently in its 13th year, and continues to grow leaders in the Asian American community in New York City – and which also continues to send Asian American student leaders to Swarthmore College. Swarthmore and the Lang Opportunity Scholarship provided me the leadership and entrepreneurial opportunities that are the foundation of my life’s work.

Passions don’t let you ignore them. When you ignore your passion for too long, it finds a way to smack you in the face and remind you of its presence.

(Cont’d)

CLASS NOTES (cont’d)

David Hochschild ’93 was recently appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to serve as a commissioner on the California Energy Commission, which is the state agency focused largely on advancing energy efficiency and renewable energy. David writes, “After spending the last 12 years in the solar industry and environmental advocacy, I am excited to get back into public service and looks forward to advancing the clean energy economy.”

Duong Tran ’15 is participating in the international Dell Social Innovation Challenge. To date, Duong’s Lang Project, Youth’s View, Voice and Vision in Society, is one among 2,592 projects from all over the world and aims to develop critical thinking, debate and public speaking skills among Vietnamese youth. His end goal is a strong network of youth with ideas, skills and self-confidence to discuss social issues effectively, formulate solutions and take actions to change society for the better. For more, check out Duong’s video at http://www.youtube.com/Daeb5jV1O2w. You can help support Duong and his Lang Project by voted in three easy steps:

1. Register (for FREE) at www.dellchallenge.org/user/register
2. Check your email and activate your account

Submissions Welcome

If you have a “class note” or “dogfish story” of your own, please consider contributing it for a future issue. Email your submission to jimagee1@swarthmore.edu.
Fall in Love with Your Dreams (cont’d)

Despite my own professional success and growth as a leader, I knew something was missing. I was living someone else’s dream. What I love most is inspiring others to live their dreams. I had always known this, but it never stuck so clearly, until now. I am currently living my dream as a business owner and life & leadership coach. The lesson for me here is this: be flexible with yourself! And to all those seeking your passion today, my advice: enjoy the ride. Your purpose and legacy is already inside of you and will reveal itself to you in different ways when you are ready and open to falling in love with it. And so, I very much have Swarthmore College and Mr. Lang to thank for this wonderful journey. I look forward to many awesome adventures to come, including being part of yours! I welcome you to contact me to swap some of your own “dogfish stories.”

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New Lang Scholar, Duong Tran ‘15 participates in United Nations Youth Assembly

From January 31 to February 1, 2013, Lang Scholar Duong Tran’15 participated in the 11th Youth Assembly at the United Nations (UN) in New York City. The Youth Assembly at the UN is an annual event organized by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation.

This event aims to bring talented youth leaders from all over the world together to discuss global issues and contribute ideas to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals. This year’s Assembly welcomed UN officials, representatives from corporations and foundations such as American Express, Microsoft, [and] Quatar Foundation, as well as various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and more than 500 youth representatives. Many representatives from other countries expressed their strong belief in a bright future for Vietnamese youth after Duong’s presentation about his Lang Project, Youth’s View, Voice and Vision in Society (YVS).

Sharing his thoughts about the Assembly, Duong said: “YVS has succeeded in introducing to the world the potential of Vietnamese youth in addressing current issues not only in Vietnam but also in many other countries. In order to do so, young Vietnamese need to acquire essential knowledge and skills in order to confidently assert their opinions and participate in high-level discussions with youth from other countries. This Assembly has been a wonderful experience for me and I hope many more Vietnamese youth will participate in international conferences in the future. These conferences will ignite innovative ideas and motivate them to take actions for a better society.”