Greetings to all of you in the YWCA community, and thank you for being part of this community.

It is hard to believe that slightly over a year ago, we were still meeting in person, thinking and hoping that we could escape the impacts of the pandemic that threatened Asia and Europe. Business as usual ended a little over a year ago, in early March 2021. We closed our building, adjusted to working and meeting virtually, and learned to wear masks, socially distance, and stay home when possible.

Then came May, the death of George Floyd, an acknowledgement of so many other deaths, including Brianna Taylor’s, at the hands of the police, and the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement. Our YWCA staff and Board took this opportunity to look again, and more deeply, at our first imperative and the first part of our mission: the elimination of racism.

This year, along with the shift to virtual programming, we are looking at the ways each program addresses this imperative. The Board formed an Antiracism Team. Our Board program committee is asking how each program would look if we truly eliminated racism.

Our Board and staff participated in the 21-day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge throughout the month of March along with other YWCAs throughout the country. This program was designed to challenge us to focus on how we, as individuals and as an organization, can eliminate racism. The themes for the four weeks have been Reparations, Racism in Sports, Gender Based Violence, and Environmental Racism. We have found this Challenge to be compelling. For many, it has raised difficult memories. For all, it has provided thought-provoking information and challenged us, as an organization and as individuals, to reassess our role in the elimination of racism.

I want to thank our dedicated staff, our outstanding Executive Director, Jenny DeRuntz, and our committed Board for working so diligently through this past year and for stepping up to meet the many challenges we have faced and continue to face. To name a few of our accomplishments this year, our Fall programs included a very successful, first virtual, Young Women & Money Conference. This February, we held our first virtual, and very successful, Festival of Women Authors. Our Racial Justice and Advocacy Teams continue to work for change in our communities, state and nation. Our Student Leadership Board continues to address issues of equity through events. We continue to reach elementary school and middle school young women through TechGYRLS and our Girls Group Mentoring Programs. Through English-In-Action, we continue to reach out to those needing to improve their English language skills or just needing a friend in a new place.
Hello! My name is Claire Kim and I’m the Program Assistant for the Young Women Financial Literacy Program. Despite the pandemic, the Young Women and Money team was able to host a virtual conference that covered a wide range of topics from budgeting and investing to saving for travel. As the program assistant, I worked with nine workshop presenters and two keynote speakers, scheduling their speaking times, answering questions, and familiarizing them with our brand new conference platform, Hopin. I also helped secure additional sponsorships and funds that were targeted to expand the reach of this year’s conference and future financial literacy events.

Together with our interns and volunteers, the members of the financial literacy program were able to brainstorm and create modules to share with high school students in the Oakland Unified School District. We hope to further expand our reach and share the importance of learning how to budget, navigate financial aid, and everyday financial literacy terms. I hope to continue to work with more volunteers and establish relationships with not only high schools, but also community colleges across the Bay Area to help make financial literacy tools more accessible!
TechGYRLS is an interactive, after-school STEM enrichment program for girls in Oakland schools. We lead the students in hands-on science experiments, discuss role models in STEM fields, and build a supportive community. In 2020, we did it without ever entering a classroom. The dedicated TechGYRLS team launched a YouTube series of fun, DIY at-home science projects for our students to watch and follow-along. Mentors demonstrated projects like exploding bags, making rain in a jar, and becoming a human sundial. These videos spread beyond our local schools to reach new students and families. In the Fall, we joined classroom Zoom calls to show live content and spend time virtually with our students. Each week, we announced the projects and watched as our students ran around the house gathering materials, and as we made new scientific discoveries in their bedrooms and kitchens. I am grateful to have witnessed the excitement of successful paper rocket flight and nearly-successful pronunciation of the respiratory system components.

Kristina Marter '21
Hello everyone! My name is Tanaya Kollipara (she/hers) and I’m a 2nd year at UC Berkeley graduating in 2023. Growing up, I moved quite a bit. In fact, I’ve lived all over the Bay Area/Central Valley, Texas, and Pennsylvania. Right now, my family and I live in Mountain House (Tracy), California. I didn’t mind all the moving, as it meant I got to meet lots of new people from different walks of life — something I’ve been able to do at the YWCA, too!

Currently, I’m the Student Coordinator and a mentor with the YWCA’s Girls Group Mentoring Program (GGMP). Since joining GGMP, I’ve had the opportunity to do what I love: working with and empowering the next generation of girls! When I arrived at Berkeley, I was looking for a place where I could work closely with the community, a place where I could connect with other students and community members. That’s when I was connected with the YWCA and introduced to GGMP — I loved what everything the organization stood for and the work GGMP was doing.

They were making meaningful change that was centered around the people they were serving; I wanted to be a part of that. So, I joined and never looked back since! Since COVID, we at GGMP have had to reframe how we work with the girls of the local community. While it definitely hasn’t been easy, transferring our very in-person, hands-on work into a virtual format, I’m proud of what we’ve been able to do! For Fall 2020, we were able to create an online Zine dedicated to presenting art from girls around the community. While it was different to what GGMP usually does, I learned the value of keeping an open-mind and staying flexible; sometimes, it can turn into a new, amazing way to empower our youth.

This Spring, we’re resuming our mentor sessions (virtually), in order to equip our girls with tools for community advocacy, along with STEM/career mentorship. Although it took some time and planning to get to this stage, I’m excited to see what we accomplish this semester!

Tanaya Kollipara’s original art submission “Interstellar” for Our Voice online magazine. Other submissions can be seen: ywca-berkeley.org/ggmp.

Des Jackson, former Program Manager, with mentees from YWCA Berkeley/Oakland Girls Group Mentoring Program in Fall ’19.

Tanaya Kollipara ’23
Meet our Spring 2021 Student Leadership Board Team! (From Top, Left to Right): Allinh Nguyen (she/her) ’21; Liz Atkins-Patterson (they/she); Malaysia Hilliard (she/her) ’23; Robyn Kazemaini (she/her) ’21; Vicky Frausto-Elizarraraz (she/her) ’23; Sanam Patel (she/her) ’21; Julia Cheunkarndee (she/her) ’23; Kathia Osuna (she/her) ’23; Amy He (she/her, Board Member)

I’ve been an active member of the YWCA since my first year at Cal for many reasons. Hailing from the Central Valley, and having never strayed from campus, I didn’t feel a connection to the Berkeley community until I came across the YWCA. As soon as I learned about their mission to eliminate racism and uplift women, I knew I needed to get involved. Seeing the range of programs that they offered made me want to join even more! Through my involvement with the YWCA, my capacity for organizing and passion for educational equity has grown. Since moving back to the Central Valley and beginning online learning, the YWCA has been my tether to the Berkeley community. My new position as SLB Program Coordinator has already taught me many valuable lessons about the logistics of centering equity and access in the midst of digital strategizing. Being involved in the Student Leadership Board has helped me develop a network, explore my passion, learn new skills like how to budget and fundraise for large scale events such as Shadow Day. It’s always been a space where I feel safe, cared for, and teaches me to take care of myself.

First Virtual 28th Annual Shadow Day (2021)

Due to COVID-19 and shifting our event to be online this year, we have the unique opportunity to expand our offerings and reach up to 1,000+ high school and college students online!

Together, Cal Mentors & High School Student Mentees will get to attend virtual speaker panels, mutually beneficial workshops for undocumented, immigrant, first generation, low income & students of color, participate in Cal Mentor & High School Student Mentee breakout rooms to connect and share experiences, as well get the chance to win awesome raffle prizes & more!

This year’s featured Shadow Day Workshops include:
- Thriving in College While Having a Status of “Undocumented” is Possible! Hosted by Immigrants Rising
- Exploring Higher Education: The 4 Systems of Higher Education, A-G Requirements & Personal Insight Questions, hosted by the Early Academic Opportunities Program (EAOP)
- Exploring Your Future: Financial Literacy for During & Post High School, hosted by the YWCA Berkeley/Oakland’s very own Financial Literacy Program

(Left to the right): Week Without Violence annual campaign organized by SLB members in October 2020. Workshop partners included PATH to Care, Californians for Justice, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, and Underground Scholars.

Kathia Osuna ‘23
MEET OUR RACIAL JUSTICE/ADVOCACY PROGRAM MEMBERS!

Image taken in our first Racial Justice/Advocacy Program of Fall 2020. (Order: Top Left to Right then Down each row). **Kaleigh Lin (she/her) '23; Liz Atkins-Patterson (she/they); Malaysia Hilliard (she/her) '23; Sage Templeton (she/her) '21; Alyssa Tillett (she/her) '21; Aaron Paek (he/him) '21; Emily Lui (she/her) '22; Aamna Haq (she/her) '21; Cristina Orellana (she/her) '22; Jayla Goler (she/her) '22; Darice Wong (they/she) '23; Dennise Puente (they/she) '21; Audrey Sayer (she/her) '21; Jaskiret Rai (he/him) '22**

Racial Justice/Advocacy members **Jayla Goler (she/her) '22** and **Gaby Campuzano** registering voters at Berkeley City College.
RACIAL JUSTICE (RJ) & ADVOCACY

My experience in the Racial Justice and Advocacy Program has been nothing short from amazing. I started participating in the YWCA’s Racial Justice Program my freshman year and I was so intrigued with everything I was learning about. I loved attending meetings and it inspired me to follow this passion and get more involved with the YWCA. Being the RJ/Advocacy Program Assistant, I am responsible for things like creating weekly Instagram posts to summarize what we discussed in our meetings as well as assisting with curriculum development. I, along with the RJ/Advocacy program members, learn about racial and social justice from a range of topics that all appeal to us one way or another such as decolonization, what role do we see ourselves playing in the movement, and so much more.

The YWCA’s transition from in person to online was very smooth. Program staff, Liz and Maria, and our program leaders did an excellent job at creating and maintaining a social and safe space for program members to get to know each other and room to share individual thoughts. I am super excited for RJ/Advocacy this spring and all of the topics that we will be discovering this semester like environmental racism, bill and legislative research, COVID-19’s racial and societal effects, queer and transgender liberation and an abundance more topics that we will get to explore together.

Although not every member is able to attend every single meeting, having meetings online allows more people, even from outside of Berkeley, to join our YWCA programs. Because of that, I am meeting so many new people and learning so much from my peers who I would not have ever met if it weren’t for the Y.

I am so grateful to have stumbled upon the YWCA and its programs my first week as a freshman because it led me to discover what I really want to do for the rest of my life: advocating for people and fighting racial injustice. I did a complete 180 and changed my major from Computer Science to intending to double major in Legal Studies and Sociology because of the YWCA’s impact on my life. Without it, I would not have had the opportunity to grow as much as I have and learn under so many wonderful and inspiring people.

Malaysia Hilliard (she/her)
‘23

Racial Justice/Advocacy Team created a Fall 2020 Calls-to-Action and Mini Resource Booklet that focused on critical racial justice legislation and transformative justice resources.
I joined the YWCA because a friend of mine was on the Student Leadership Board. I had just started college a few months before, and I was starting to get in the groove of things. I was really involved in extracurriculars in high school, and community work had always been central to my academic experience. When I moved from Fresno to Berkeley, I barely knew anyone, and despite the efforts on campus to build community, it’s really hard to meet people. I tried to join a few clubs, but they rejected my applications. All my classes were huge lectures where everyone essentially ignored each other. I was spending more time wandering around by myself than I ever had in my life before. So second semester, when a girl I knew from high school sent me the SLB application, I was ready to do whatever. I had never been inside the building before or really interacted with any YWCA chapter anywhere. When I came to the first meeting, it was already unlike anything I had ever been a part of before. There was no competition, but everyone was still working really hard for the team. We started meetings with hand acknowledgements, which I had never heard of. The team and the advisors were all extremely supportive and understanding of our other school and work schedules and encouraged us to work harder without being overbearing. Working on Shadow Day with that team, especially as the pandemic started and everything seemed to start falling apart, was the most fulfilling thing I’ve done in college so far.

My supervisor on that team recommended me for another position as the Social Media Manager for the Communications Team, which I’ve been on ever since. The Comms team is just as fulfilling, and the team is just as wonderful, which makes it clear to me that it really is the culture of the YWCA and not just my one good supervisor. In my new role, I get to understand a lot more about the whole chapter and uplift everyone’s work. It’s been really fun getting to see new people engage with the YWCA and find our content. I’ve learned so much about myself and the world around me the past few years of college, as everyone does, but the YWCA has contributed more to my growth here than anything else, including UC Berkeley itself.

Zoe Miller ’22
ENGLISH IN ACTION

MEMORABLE ENGLISH IN ACTION
EXPERIENCES FROM CHINA, JAPAN and SOUTH KOREA

It is with great pleasure to share my experiences with Cixiao, Chie and Yan, wonderful students from the English In Action Program (EIA). Though I was fortunate to have several students in this English exchange program, I could not write about all of them in such a short period of time and space. Yet their photos are included.

Cixiao Wang was from China. She was, like myself, an educator and she was in the process of completing her Ph.D. dissertation at UC Berkeley. I was immediately touched when I first met her and she showed me around the UC Berkeley Education Building where she was doing her research. She was precious, sweet and sensitive. Soon I learned that she was also an artist, and we began our EIA sessions with lunch and art painting together at my home. We enjoyed going to the Rose Garden in Berkeley and also meeting at local cafes for coffee. After the first week of meeting her, she invited my husband, George, and me for dinner at her Albany apartment. It is there that George and I enjoyed a superb homemade Chinese dinner cooked by Cixiao and her lovely roommate, Yan Liu who was also from China. Yan later became another student of mine and she shared her Dance and Art History expertise with me. Her Chinese dancing was phenomenal. We also had her husband, Jacob and her for dinner when he came to the USA for a visit. Chie Yamaoka was from Japan, my very first student, and a charming mother of her special young daughter, Chinatsu. She was also a devoted wife to her husband, Toru, who was a Visiting Professor at UC Berkeley. Chie and I had loads of fun attending different cafes, stores and bookstores in Berkeley, having dinner with her family at our home, and a lunch out with her mother and sister at Fourth Street who both visited her from Japan. Chie was special also. For many of my students, I also invited them for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, and also birthdays and good bye parties at my home.

The hardest part of EIA is letting go in my heart when all these students have to depart back to their homeland country. When Chie left back for Japan, there was such sadness in my heart. When Yan left, I felt a loss of artistic inspiration. But when Cixiao departed for China, I cried. What memorable experiences all my EIA students have left me with, and I am forever grateful for the English In Action Program of YWCA Berkeley/Oakland for all the many students who touched my life. These wonderful students gave me invaluable hope that the world is filled with good people, and is a diverse and hugely wondrous place!

Ann Jean Millikan, EIA Volunteer

Cixiao Wang from China, EIA partner.

Yan Liu, EIA partner, with Ann, George (Ann’s husband) and pet dog King Louie.

Chie Yamaoka, EIA partner (far left), and her family from Japan, with George, (3rd from left) and Ann (4th from left).
UNDER THE ROOF and QUIET HALLS of YWCA

This past year of shelter in place has slowed the pace of life down for many of us as well as increased the time we all spend at home.

Home renovation and upkeep projects have seen a massive uptick, and it is no different over here at the YWCA. The lessened foot traffic and calmer atmosphere has allowed us to implement some general housekeeping projects that had previously been on the back burner. The YWCA building was first erected in 1958 and many of the items in the building are original – however, that also means it often needs some general maintenance! We recently had a locksmith out to replace one of our 50 year old lock cylinders – he was very impressed it had still been working!

I began as the building manager in July of 2020, taking on the additional duties in tandem with my bookkeeping role. One of the bigger projects currently underway is to replace the lovely trellis on the west side patio. While dealing with city permitting is no easy feat, it is exciting to learn more about the history of the YWCA’s landmark status, see original pictures and speak with architects about the different ideas to improve the structure while retaining its original beauty. This is still a work in progress, but we will be adding to the construction noises currently occurring on both sides of us soon.

While we look forward to the days when the halls are bustling with students and employees again, I also enjoy the quiet moments of afternoon light streaming into the atrium. We hope you all are taking advantage of those quiet moments at home as well.

Allison Peck
Accounts Manager

As a former YWCA volunteer and Intern Coordinator for the YWCA Advocacy Program during my time at UC Berkeley, I have been feeling grateful to be able to continue working here as the Office Manager and gain different perspectives as well as experiences as a staff member. While as a volunteer, I focused more narrowly on the Advocacy Program and learned how to analyze legislation and effectively advocate for racial justice and gender equity initiatives, the Office Manager position has taught me first-hand how much support that staff provides for their volunteers in each program and how each staff member is dedicated to providing quality programming for their volunteers.

During the time of the Covid-19 Pandemic especially, the emptiness of the office was a testament to how the YWCA Berkeley/Oakland building space was bustling and busy before the pandemic hit. A lot of the work done in office have successfully shifted, however, into a digital and virtual setting.

While this shift has definitely brought up important considerations, such as digital fatigue, this shift has also opened up opportunities for the YWCA Berkeley/Oakland to explore further digital outreach and communication methods, accessibility for programming, and new ways to deconstruct and understand our program analytics.

Being able to continue working with the Front Desk interns and other students through virtual communication has also led to different, collaborative projects between staff and students, and we look forward to the days of when we are able to meet and collaborate together in-person!

Dohee Kim
Office Manager
"GGMP has been an immensely rewarding experience, where I’m able to connect not only with the girls of the program but also the mentors! I love seeing our impact, equipping girls with the tools to advocate through art and activism, and can’t wait to see what else we do this year."

Tanaya Kollipara, ’23, Girls Group Mentoring Program (GGMP) Mentor

CAREER-COACHING

COVID has changed many parts of our lives, including our careers. Instead of facilitating career workshops, I now offer personal telecoaching. How has COVID affected your work life? Is it time for a check-up and the opportunity to consider new goals or strategies? Do you need a cheerleader to keep you moving ahead? Your current membership in the Berkeley YWCA comes with a bonus. Your first half-hour session with me is free. Additional sessions are a reasonable $25 each. Signing up is easy on the YWCA website. The short form you complete will give me your pressing questions and needs so we can jump in quickly together. I look forward to working with you.

Claire Marchiano, YWCA Career Coach

FELIX, CARETAKER

Felix Tsai posing in front of a clock on UC Berkeley campus. (January 30, 2021)

Original Felix Tsai collage of The Campanile at UC Berkeley campus with a pink flower on top of the tower.

Ana Rivas, our housekeeper for over 20 years, continues to be safe at home with family and continues making the YWCA look its best! She is thankful to live nearby to her sister and her children.
On February 24th, 2021 from 4:30-7PM, the YWCA Berkeley/Oakland hosted a virtual YWCA Orientation organization-wide. This Orientation is one of four workshops that will continue in the following months for program leaders, staff, interns, and Board members. Out of four workshops, this Orientation focused on the YWCA’s launch of the 21-Day Racial Equity & Social Justice Challenge. In addition, participants of this Orientation discussed Mapping our Roles in Social Movements and how we as individuals and as part of the collective community all play a role in the pursuit of equity, liberation, inclusion, and justice!
The YWCA’s 27th annual Festival of Women Authors made its virtual debut on Saturday, February 6, 2021. The event featured author and essayist, Megan Stielstra *The Wrong Way to Save Your Life*, the 2017 Nonfiction Book of the Year from the Chicago Review of Books, and author, Meredith May *The Honey Bus: A Memoir of Loss, Courage and a Girl Saved by Bees*, translated into eleven languages. The literary event was full of captivating stories, frank reflections, inspiration, and great questions from our virtual audience.

The annual fundraiser provides assistance for our community programs. We thank our attendees for their continued support and look forward to the next festival in February 2022!

*Cherisse Baatin*, Festival of Women Authors Chair & YWCA Board Member
21 DAY RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CHALLENGE

The 21-Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge provided our community with the opportunity to take powerful individual and collective action to Eliminate Racism and Empower Women by supporting local, statewide and national initiatives led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-led organizations to advance racial and gender justice. The 21-Day Challenge was designed to provide accessible ways to deepen our knowledge and understanding, and to take meaningful action in support of racial and gender justice, wherever an individual may be in the process. Through creating dedicated time and space to integrate anti-racist education and action into our daily lives, we can more meaningfully engage with issues of race, power, privilege and leadership for the long haul.

The YWCA Berkeley/Oakland’s 21-Day Challenge launched on Monday, March 1st and continued (Monday–Friday) through March 29th, 2021. Each day of the challenge, participants were presented with various activities, such as reading an article, listening to a podcast, reflecting on a personal experience, sharing opportunities to move resources and take direct action to support the work of BIPOC-led organizations. Participation in an activity like this can help us discover how racial and social injustice impact our community, to build community with others, and to identify ways to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression.

We know these discussions can be difficult and can evoke powerful emotions, but your commitment to increasing awareness and being anti-racist is what helps move our community forward! Thank you for your participation in the 21 Day Challenge!

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Hayla Dargahi, Program Manager
Jenny DeRuntz, Executive Director
Maria Guillen, Director of Programs & Empowerment
Rena Marie Guidry, Associate Director
Dohee Kim, Office Manager
Karen Lei, Program Manager
Claire Marchiano, Career Counselor
Alison Peck, Accounts Manager
Ana Rivas, Housekeeper
Noelle Terrero, Program Manager
Felix Tsai, Caretaker

STUDENT ASSISTANTS & INTERNS

Isabelle Chiu ‘22, Fund Development Intern
Malaysia Hilliard ‘23, Racial Justice Program Intern
Claire Kim ‘21, Financial Literacy Program Intern
Tanaya Kollipara ‘23, Girls Group Mentoring Program Intern
Sandya Krishna ‘21, Financial Literacy Program Intern
Erin Lee, Analytics Intern
Huiming (Abbie) Lei ‘22, English-In-Action Assistant
Zoe Miller ‘23, Communications/Social Media Intern Coordinator
Anjali Nilay, Fund Development Intern
Kathia Osuna ‘23, SLB & Racial Justice/Advocacy Coordinator
Sage Templeton ‘21, Administrative Assistant
Milla Weinstein (HS ‘22), Communications/Social Media Intern
Heather Yabut ‘22, Administrative Assistant
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Board and Student Leader Social

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Girls Group Mentoring Program

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YWCA Berkeley/Oakland "Under One Roof" Newsletter Spring 2021 Edition

YWCA Berkeley/Oakland Open House

Student Leadership Board & Shadow Day Event

World YWCA Day and Student Leadership Board Members

Advocacy Team