

# FELTON DECEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

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**FSA**  
Family Service Agency  
of San Francisco

*Lives Transformed*



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## Felton Spotlight: Amy Yu, Program Director, SCSEP



Amy Yu, Program Director for Felton's Senior Community Service Employment Program, [SCSEP], has a warm and engaging personality. She is passionate about life and she loves talking about her work at SCSEP, a program that helps older adults find employment. The baby of her family, Amy was born in Hong Kong, but her family moved to San Francisco, CA, when Amy was four years old.

"I have a half-sister, two older brothers and I am the youngest member of the family. We are all four years apart. The best life lesson learned from my parents was to be independent. Throughout my life, they raised me in a way to be able to support myself, whether financially or just with everyday tasks," Amy shares. Effie was told that San Francisco, California, was the most beautiful place in the United States, so she decided to see for herself. After one month, she decided to make the Bay Area her home.

Amy attended Jean Parker Elementary School and Marina Middle School. Her family moved from San Francisco to Richmond, California, where Amy attended De Anza High School. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at California State University, Hayward, which is now known as California State University, East Bay.

"I had to learn survival skills on my own and paid for all of my college on my own through getting financial aid and working. In college, I had to work weekends and pay my own way. When I was completing my master's program for healthcare administration, I was working full-time and going to night school. The values that were instilled in me were to treat everyone with respect, especially your elders and to have compassion and gratitude for what you have. This is where my optimism comes in; I see everything with a glass half full versus a glass half empty, and I give everyone the benefit of the doubt, as you never know what someone has been through. There was always lots of advice, but I think for me, my parents and grandparents being the role models that they were and really walking the walk was the most important. I always say, you can talk a good game, but it's the actions that mean the most to me," Amy recalls.

Healthcare always had a special appeal for Amy, but she didn't know which specific industry would evolve into a career path. She considered physical therapy, social work and nursing, but after she completed her bachelor's degree in health sciences, she settled on a master's in healthcare administration with a concentration and focus on Change Management.

Amy says, “I worked in independent/assisted living facilities, dementia units, and worked in sub-acute psychiatric facilities. I did an internship at Laguna Honda Hospital and worked with many different types of older adult populations. My last position was at Institute on Aging (IOA), where I was in three different managerial positions. I was with IOA for about 10 years and needed a change, which brought me to Felton Institute. I had been looking for other employment opportunities, found the posting for Felton and was intrigued by the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).



I submitted my resume, was interviewed and at the time, I was very impressed by the mission and vision of the organization. We touch so many lives each and every day. There are over 50 programs that span across all spectrums of life from children, families, adults, families and older adults. I am truly impressed each time I learn more about all of the programs and what they do.”

Amy joined Felton on January 10, 2018. What she finds most fulfilling is helping adults ages 55 and older find new meaningful work and regain the dignity that comes with it.

“The most rewarding is helping someone get to success, whether it be learning a new skill, moving forward in small steps, getting over their fear of something or our goal of helping them with economic self-sufficiency. It’s expensive to live and survive in San Francisco. When someone needs our help in finding a job, it’s rewarding during the exit interview when they are so thankful for our program and they tell us that without SCSEP and our support, they would not have been able to get that job, that’s what I live to hear, day in and day out! This is why I work as hard as I do, for those success stories and the lives we have touched. The most challenging part of my job is that I am the only paid staff in my program. All of the people that help me run the operations of SCSEP are all trainees and can leave the training program for a job at any time. I am constantly having to train on a daily basis and cross train in multiple positions, so that we can continuously move forward and be able to meet our performance measures, have consistent outcomes and reach our goals, “ Amy explains.

When she is not working, Amy and her husband are very busy with their five-year-old and two-and-a-half-year-old. Before the children arrived, she enjoyed snowboarding, international travel, discovering new restaurants and hiking. Now the main focus is keeping the two little ones occupied and finding a balance with everything on her very full plate. As she continues to savor both professional and personal success, Amy Yu stays true to her motto, “keep moving forward and keep learning!”

# Young Adult Court's December Graduation



On December 12, 2019, six participants of [Young Adult Court \(YAC\)](#) celebrated a milestone with their graduation. This brings the total number of graduates over the past three years to 101 for this unique Collaborative Court program.

The [Young Adult Court](#) was established in 2015 for eligible young adults, ages 18-25. Partner agencies with Felton include the Superior Court, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, the Department of Public Health, Adult Probation Department, Department of Children, Youth and their Families, and the San Francisco Police Department.

Felton Institute provides intensive case management and therapeutic assessments for clients who are facing misdemeanor or felony crimes. Most YAC participants are engaged with the program for at least one year and transition through four phases with a focus on job readiness, housing, educational support and parenting.

Lead Public Defender Manohar Raju shared a bit of his personal story with the graduates and provided inspiration for the future.

Felton's YAC Program Manager Celina Hennessey reflected with the graduates on the incredible efforts they have made to complete the program. And she reminded them of skills they will keep using in the future:

- Ask for support
- Set limits and create boundaries with those who don't have their best interests at heart
- Remember to breathe and pause before making decisions.

The audience of YAC participants, family, friends and system supporters also heard words of appreciation from two members of the graduating class. The graduates expressed their gratitude for their support teams and advised the current participants to “dig deep and do what you have to do” to graduate and reap the benefits of YAC graduation.

Dr. Robin Ortiz, Director of Business Development said, “We could not agree more. Expungement of a record or even significantly reduced charges lead to more positive developmental pathways for the transitional age youth who are able to participate in such programs. The Felton [Young Adult Court](#) team wishes all the graduates much success!”



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You can learn more about Felton's [Young Adult Court Program](#) on our website:



[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

# Felton Staff and Board Enjoy a Holiday Party



On December 6, 2019, Felton staff, their families, and board members gathered at the beautiful War Memorial Building in San Francisco for the annual holiday party. They enjoyed dancing, delicious food, and a photo booth. The staff worked very hard this year, and it was great to see everyone come together to celebrate. Felton has 18 sites in the Bay Area, so it's always fun when the many divisions of Felton can mingle under one roof.

Felton's President and CEO Al Gilbert welcomed everyone, noting that this year marked Felton's 130 year anniversary and appreciating the significance of leading an organization that has provided services without interruption since 1889.

## Five long time employees were honored for years of dedication to Felton Institute:

Fiscal Administration Assistant **Denise Hereford** is celebrating 45 years with Felton, Training & Volunteer/Intern Coordinator **Phyllis Hogan** in the Children, Youth & Family (CYF) Division joined the team 38 years ago, **Arsenia (Seny) Lajom**, Accounts Payable Manager, has enjoyed being with Felton for 34 years.

Ombudsman Program Director **Benson Nadell** has been advocating for older adults for 33 years, and CYF Head Teacher Reyna Ferreira began instructing Felton's youngest clients 32 years ago.



Each person shared what has inspired them to work with Felton for decades and received an award and a certificate. We are so excited for our colleagues and are thrilled they have been part of Felton Institute for so long.



Congratulations to all and happy holidays from everyone at Felton!

HAPPY  
*Holidays*  
from all of us at Felton Institute

## Santa Came to Town for Breakfast



On December 14, 2019, Felton staff members and their children enjoyed a holiday treat. The historic 2730 Bryant Street Family Developmental Center hosted a pancake breakfast featuring a special guest: Santa Claus!

Felton's Fun Committee worked tirelessly to put this event together, and they did an amazing job. The room was beautifully decorated with tinsel, snowmen, lights, and an impressive tree. The families enjoyed pancakes, sausage, eggs, and cereal and decorated stockings and snowflakes in a festive, cheerful atmosphere. The little ones shared their holiday gift wish list with Santa, and kids of all ages took photos with jolly Saint Nick.

**Everyone is already looking forward to next year's Breakfast with Santa!**



# Felton and You: The Power of Inclusion



*“It’s time. Time to hear what people with disabilities are saying. Time to confront prejudices regarding the value of all people. Time to realize that the exclusion of one endangers us all.”*

- Dave Hingsburger,  
Renown expert and member of the  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

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December 3, 2019, was celebrated as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

How can we, collectively, as a society, do better to serve those with disabilities? Inclusion is key. Nearly one in seven people on earth have some sort of disability.

These numbers come from an international survey by the World Health Organization and the World Bank. That’s about 15% of the world population. There are mobility and physical impairments, vision and hearing disabilities, psychological disorders, and cognitive delays. The late physicist Steven Hawking said, “There’s a moral obligation to help people with disabilities.” We as a society are called upon to rise to the challenge of meeting the needs of those with disabilities that are visible or invisible.

The term inclusive captures in a word, an all-embracing ideology. Starting with the littlest members of our community, we must help keep youth with disabilities secure, safe, and accepted. In terms of the education setting, inclusion secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside other students in general education classrooms.

Felton Institute's programs, like those at our [Family Developmental Center](#), practice inclusion. Not only does this cover technology and equipment to provide children with disabilities with quality education, but the programs include social, emotional, and academic support. Felton understands that kindergarten readiness starts from birth and involves working with parents.

To learn more about how Felton's programs of inclusivity helped one mother and her daughter, you can [watch our video](#).

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This month, we invite you to consider a contribution to Felton Institute.

Felton Institute's [Family Developmental Center](#) is one of the many sites Felton operates for children of different abilities and special needs. Donating is easy! To give, just text FELTON on 41444 on your mobile device.

**DONATE ONLINE**



**DONATE**



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