



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

Headquarters: 1765 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
DC Office: 1850 M Street NW, Suite 1100 • Washington, DC • 20036
Phone: (202) 223-1240 • Fax: (202) 296-8082 • E-mail: natdir@jacl.org

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CONTACT: Floyd Mori, JACL National Executive Director natdir@jacl.org

JACL SUMMER INTERNS IN D.C.

Washington, D.C.—The summer intern season has ended for college student interns from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who were assigned to the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization. As July wraps up, so does the work of the interns, Bruce Kung, Rebecca Tien, and Bonny Tsang, who are completing their assignments at the JACL Washington, D.C. office. The students were positioned in the JACL through the EPA to work on environmental issues. The three interns came into their internships with diverse backgrounds and unique interests in various fields of study. Bruce and Rebecca were fellows in the International Leadership Foundation program and Bonny Tsang an intern for the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies. The interns each had different expectations for their jobs yet all developed skills in advocacy, policy, and networking. Although they will not be in attendance, they also helped with preparations for the upcoming JACL Gala in September.

Bruce Kung is a rising senior at Michigan State University studying Supply Chain Management. His goal for the summer was to gain a greater understanding of the government, specifically the EPA. However, his internship at the JACL gave him a chance to write up press releases, digests, and carry out the daily tasks required for a non-profit organization. His designated projects were to prepare the "issues" content for the JACL website and voter registration for the Vietnamese fishermen in the Gulf Coast. He plans to return to Saginaw, MI, to work at his parent's restaurant for the remainder of the summer until school begins in the fall. Following his last year in college, Bruce plans to carry over his newfound skills to his future career.

Rebecca Tien is a rising junior at Santa Clara University double majoring in Accounting and Environmental Studies. For her internship at the JACL, she worked extensively on a grant proposal from the EPA to create a training program for environmental education. Other tasks that she completed within the organization include drafting letters and contacting congressional staffers. Rebecca's next steps back home and at school are to become further involved in Asian American issues, environmental studies and eventually, to campaign for a congressional office.

Bonny Tsang is a rising senior at University of Pennsylvania majoring in Political Science with minors in Environmental Studies and Asian American Studies. Her internship experience mirrors Rebecca's closely as they worked jointly on the EPA grant proposal trying to connect with organizations around the country to join the grant. She attended Hill visits to hear about current bills and legislations and presented in workshops on environmental justice. Bonny has expressed interest in working on Capitol Hill, and we can probably expect her back in Washington, DC in the near future.

National JACL Executive Director Floyd Mori, stated: “The JACL was extremely fortunate to have these three outstanding young people serve in the JACL DC office. We are grateful for their valuable contributions and wish them well as they return to their studies. They are now members of the JACL, and we hope JACL leaders and members will embrace them in their respective chapters. We can expect big things of them in the future.”

Interns are extremely helpful in moving the JACL work forward. Two other part-time interns who recently started to serve on a volunteer basis in the Washington, D.C. JACL office are Kan Tagami, a high school student from Falls Church, Virginia, and Anna Kuniyama, who moved to Washington, D.C. from California.

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