

# CHINATOWN LIBRARY FOCUS GROUPS REPORT

A report by the Chinese Youth Initiative (CYI) and the Friends of the Chinatown Library (FOCL)

## Vision for a Chinatown Library

The Friends of the Chinatown Library (FOCL) and the Chinese Youth Initiative (CYI) partnered to host a series of focus groups with youth, parents, and elderly to gather community input for a Chinatown Library. The data from these focus groups were used to create a community vision for the future Chinatown Library. A summary of the findings from the focus groups were presented at a community meeting on June 8, 2015 to the Mayor's Office, Boston Public Library, City and State representatives and the community at large.

## Common Themes

Results from focus groups with youth, parents, and elderly revealed six common themes in community members' vision for a Chinatown Library.

1. Community Cultural Center/ History Preservation
2. Safe space for community gatherings
3. Higher education preparedness
4. Job Training and Skills Trainings
5. Resources for Immigrant Families
6. Entertainment and fun



The Chinatown Library focus groups results were presented at a community meeting

The Director of Boston Public Library branches, Christine Schonhart, the Mayor's Chinatown/ Downtown Liaison, Denny Ching, and representatives from City Councilors Wu and Flaherty's offices and State Representative Aaron Michlewitz's office, attended the community meeting. There were over 50 community members who attended.

### Youth Services 青年服務



- College and Financial Aid Assistance
- ESL Class for Adults
- Bilingual Services
- Job Opportunities
- Homework Help
- Classes for the Elderly

### Youth Spaces 青年空間



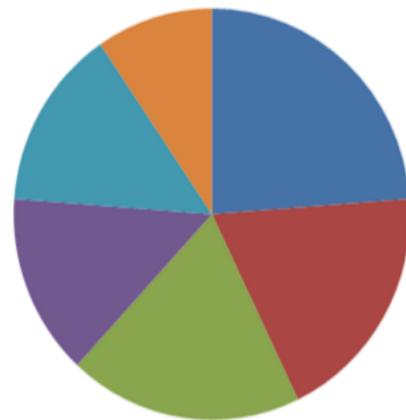
- Quiet Study Room
- Computer Lounge
- Resource Center
- Cafe
- Movie Room
- Community/Relaxing Room

### Parent Services 父母服務



- Bilingual Computer Classes
- Chinese Historical/Cultural Space
- Support for new immigrants
- Bilingual internet classes
- Tutoring
- Citizenship Classes

### Parents Spaces 父母空間



- Children's Room
- Workshop Room
- Computer Lounge
- Chinese Book Room
- Chinatown History and Culture Room
- Elderly Space

## Methods

### Participants

Youth  
(30 participants)

Elderly  
(22 participants)

Parents  
(7 participants)

### Recruitment Partners

Boston Chinatown  
Neighborhood Center

Chinatown Residents  
Association

Chinese Progressive  
Association

Josiah Quincy  
School

Tenant Organizations

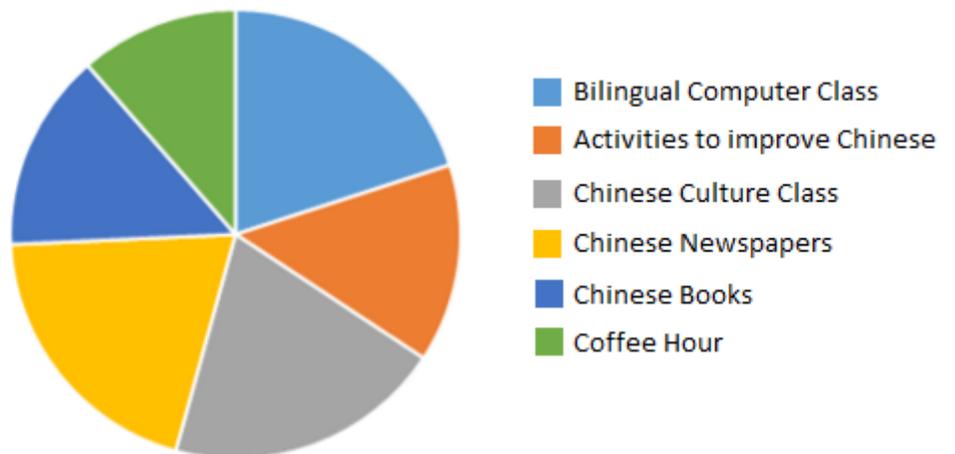
### Languages

Cantonese

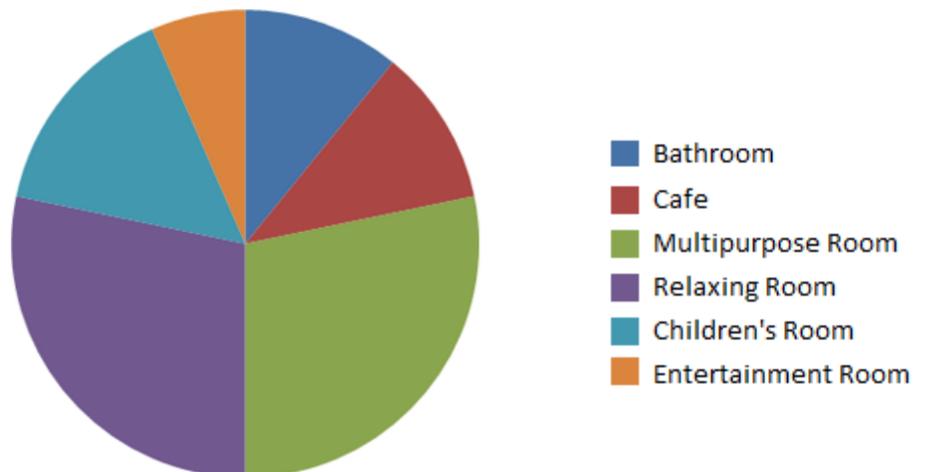
English

Mandarin

## Elderly Services 長者服務



## Elderly Spaces 長者空間



Focus groups were conducted with youth, parents, and elderly to see what kinds of services and spaces members from each group would like to see in the Chinatown Library. The six most popular choices from each category are shown in these charts.

The results show how a Chinatown Library is an important resource that will foster intergenerational connections and provide more than just books. A library is a critical need for a neighborhood like Chinatown where there is a large low income immigrant population and lower education levels than other Boston neighborhoods. A Chinatown Library is important for enriching and sharing the community's story and culture.

Community members' vision for the Chinatown Library is in line with the BPL's mission for libraries "to serve the cultural, educational, and informational needs of the people."

# Chinatown Library Timeline

- 1896 Tyler Street Branch Library opens at 130 Tyler Street.
- 1938 Branch Library closes in 1938 and reopens in 1951.
- 1956 Branch Library demolished by urban renewal.
- 2001 The Chinese Youth Initiative (CYI) Youth start the library campaign after surveying the community. The Friends of the Chinatown Library launches.
- 2006 A feasibility and siting study for a library in Chinatown is funded by the City of Boston.
- 2009 The Chinatown Storefront Library opens and closes after three months.
- 2012 The Chinatown Lantern Reading Room opens at Oak Terrace and closes in 2013.
- 2013 CYI collects and sends over 1000 postcards advocating for library services in Chinatown to BPL President, Amy Ryan. During his candidacy, Mayor Walsh signs a pledge committing to building a Chinatown Library.
- 2014 CYI youth collect over 600 petition signatures in support of community benefits funding for library services in Chinatown.
- 2015 CYI Library Committee meets with Boston City Councilors to advocate for the City to fund a Chinatown Branch Library. CYI partners with the Friends of the Chinatown Library (FOCL) to conduct focus groups to develop a community vision for a Chinatown Branch Library.

Learn more about Chinese Youth Initiative and Chinatown Cultural Center

## Chinese Youth Initiative (CYI)

Chinese Youth Initiative is a youth leadership program of the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), a grassroots community organization that works for the full equality and empowerment of the Chinese American community in Greater Boston. Through CYI, youth learn about issues in their communities and ways to make positive changes in the community. Since 2001 CYI has been working with the Friends of the Chinatown Library to bring a library back to Chinatown.

## Friends of the Chinatown Library (FOCL)

The Friends of the Chinatown Library (FOCL), formerly known as the Chinatown Cultural Center (CCC) aims to serve the Chinatown and Greater Boston community by providing innovative programming, library services, and an intergenerational community cultural space. The FOCL's board includes community leaders with deep roots in Chinatown who have been involved since the beginning of the Friends of the Chinatown Library as well as newer board members who have a variety of skills and experience.

## Contact Us

For more information or to get involved:

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