

MEDIA RELEASE

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Palo Alto's Chinese Community Steps up to Bring History to All Community support and new endorsement from historian for Museum project

Palo Alto, CA – The Palo Alto Museum announced a new endorsement today from Stanford history professor Gordon H. Chang. This follows a flurry of recent donations from members of the Chinese community in Palo Alto, some of whom are new to town, many of whom are third- and fourth-generation residents.

“Our community is blessed with a long and rich history to which many diverse people from around the world have contributed, and continue to contribute,” Chang said. “Chinese Americans have long formed an important and proud part of our community and today, because of recent immigration, Chinese is the second most-spoken language in Palo Alto. I offer my support of the Palo Alto Museum and applaud the effort to remember the past so as to better inform the future.”

Movements often start with small events — and curiosity. Executive Director Laura Bajuk attended the Chinese New Year's celebration this February at Mitchell Park “to see my friend Kimberley Wong's display on her family's history in Palo Alto, thinking about what people might see in the future Museum.” Bajuk adds, “her family story here goes back to 1900.”

A large, crowded event with activities for all ages, it also featured a Stanford-sponsored exhibit about the Chinese railroad workers who built the transcontinental railroad, which was completed 150 years ago in 2019. Several panels detail the story of these unsung heroes, the thousands of men who hand-cut a path through the harshest western terrain, and for the lowest wages. “Without them, the transcontinental railroad would not have happened,” says Monica Yeung Arima, who coordinated and raised funds for the traveling exhibit. History professor Gordon Chang was co-leader of the history project and the exhibits.

Donors have stepped up, in addition to Chang's endorsement. Kimberley and Monica, adding friends Amy Yang and Debra Cen have joined a growing group of avid volunteers who have become passionate about a history museum in Palo Alto. Dr. Gloria Hom, who serves on the Museum's advisory board, recently coordinated a very successful house party to support the Museum. “We had over 80 guests, which was huge,” Bajuk added. “Many have become new donors and are spreading the word through a custom donation app, social media, and good old word of mouth.” That house party has raised over \$155,000, with more coming in every week. Bajuk adds: “We are working to reach every segment of our community, so that everyone's stories will be told in the new Museum.” (Learn more at paloaltomuseum.org)

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The Palo Alto Museum is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization which is developing the first history museum for the Palo Alto and Stanford Community. The historic Roth Building in downtown Palo Alto is nearing its long-awaited renovation thanks to a private-public partnership with the Museum and City of Palo Alto to create a showcase for Palo Alto’s dramatic local history. Support for the Museum’s mission continues to expand as fundraising continues toward its \$20 million capital campaign goal.

Among its many benefits, the Museum will provide community gathering rooms, classrooms, interactive exhibits and a media center. This participatory Museum will be a new cultural destination in Palo Alto for anyone interested in learning about this creative community and its legacy of innovation, inspiring future invention with insights from the past. The Museum will also serve as the new home of the century-old Palo Alto Historical Association, steward of the City of Palo Alto archives. For more information please contact us at info@paloaltomuseum.org.

A community-driven effort, the Museum is supported by over 650 individuals, corporations, foundations—and the City of Palo Alto.

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