

I Listen with My Eyes:’ One RSF Awardee’s Remarkable Story

“I can tell a lot from a face.” That’s how Antioch High School senior Daniel Fung began his Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation (RSF) application essay.

In it he explained that both his parents were deaf, and by communicating with them through American Sign Language (ASL) he learned to read faces. “I listen with my eyes,” he explained. Facial expressions weren’t just “emotional cues;” they also functioned as “grammatical markers.” When his mom raised her eyebrows he knew she was turning a statement into a question. When he observed his dad slightly puckering his lips and furrowing his eyebrows, he knew it signaled anger. But outside the home, Fung learned, ASL was treated differently. He recalled one recent moment when his dad was involved in a three-car accident. As the event evolved Fung tried to process all the noise.

There were the police operator’s questions, one driver’s frantic English, another’s Spanish that Fung only half-understood, and his dad’s rapid signs. When one of the other drivers began blaming his father, Fung realized he had to make sure his father was understood so that the officer would comprehend what had actually happened.

These are the kinds of remarkable stories that frequently pop up in RSF applications, stories that deeply affect trustees who encounter them. Take RSF Trustee Peter Yang. When Fung stepped onto the stage at the RSF Award Ceremony at the Events Center on Sunday, May 3, 2026, to announce that he would be attending Stanford and planned to major in computer science and neuroscience, Yang “was deeply impressed.”

As he scanned the audience while Fung received his scholarship certificate, however, Yang noticed a young woman using sign language to interpret everything happening on stage to an older couple beside her. “The scene caught my attention and stirred my curiosity.” After the ceremony, he spotted Fung near the photo booth and went over to congratulate him. As they talked Yang also learned about Fung’s extensive extracurricular work. For example, he founded a STEM club at Antioch High School, then through it tutored many elementary school students after school.

And as they spoke, his sister and parents joined them, and his sister immediately began using ASL to interpret the conversation they were having. In that conversation Yang also learned that Fung’s sister was a senior at UC Berkeley, and another sibling was studying at Stanford who had previously received an RSF award. He also heard that because their father—an accountant and for most of their lives the family’s sole breadwinner—had recently been laid off, the family was at the time relying on social support.

Yang expressed sorrow at the family’s misfortune, but quickly reflected on the reason they were all standing there in conversation—spoken and unspoken.

“I was grateful that the Rossmoor Scholarship Foundation could offer meaningful opportunities to young people like Daniel—students who persevere, overcome obstacles, and bring hope to our community’s future.”

Daniel Fung’s life story parallels the struggles many RSF scholarship award winners have experienced, struggles that greet RSF Trustees in many of the scholarship applications they read every year. To help support students like him, Rossmoorians are strongly encouraged to contribute to RSF. And because RSF trustees cover all administrative costs (here comes the RSF birdsong), “every dollar donated goes into a scholarship.”

Submitted by: Wayne A. Wiegand, RSF Trustee