

Community Advocacy Award



Suzanne Lee has established herself as one of the most influential and dedicated community leaders in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood. As a longstanding Boston resident, she has spent decades working tirelessly to improve the lives of those in her community, with a particular focus on supporting older adults and promoting equity.

Lee arrived in Boston from Hong Kong at a young age to join her family. She quickly recognized the unique challenges facing fellow immigrant families in the community. With a deep understanding of the barriers to services and resources that many Chinese immigrants encounter, she committed herself to creating meaningful solutions that would address these gaps.

One of Lee's most significant contributions came through her role in establishing the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), an organization that has become vital to Chinatown's community infrastructure. Through the CPA, she has helped develop programs addressing housing security, healthcare navigation, and social isolation within the immigrant community. Her work has been particularly impactful for seniors, who often face additional challenges due to language barriers and cultural differences when accessing essential services.

Beginning her career as a teacher at the Josiah Quincy School, Lee played an important role in bridging the language barrier between Chinatown parents and the Boston School Committee. She later served as the school's principal, earning praise for excellent academics, before retiring in 2009. Lee co-founded the Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association (MAAEA), and continues to advocate for inclusive education by serving on the Massachusetts Advisory Council for the Advancement of Representation in Education (ACARE).

Currently, Lee serves as the board chair of the Chinatown Community Land Trust, advocating for the land rights of Chinatown's working families and older adults protecting Chinatown as a neighborhood safe for living and aging. She also served as a member of the Chinatown Master Plan Committee in 2020, guiding policies for the future of Chinatown's historical and cultural preservation.

Her commitment to older adults is further exemplified through her service as a Boston Senior Home Care board member, where she brought invaluable insights about the needs of local Chinese American seniors. Lee's understanding of culturally appropriate care has helped shape more accessible and effective services for older adults in the community.

Beyond her formal roles, Lee has been a persistent advocate for improved healthcare access, language-accessible programs, and cultural competence in service delivery. She has worked with numerous community organizations and city offices to ensure that the voices of Chinatown residents are heard in policy discussions and resource allocation decisions.

Throughout her career, Suzanne Lee has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to community empowerment and social justice. Her leadership has built bridges between generations, cultures, and institutions, creating lasting positive change for Boston's Chinatown neighborhood. Her legacy continues to inspire new generations of community advocates and leaders who share her vision of a more inclusive, supportive, and culturally rich community.



Suzanne Lee with Margaret Hogan, CEO of Boston Senior Home Care, at Boston Senior Home Care's 2024 Gala.