

Vallejo is grateful for...

Teekz Yenpasook



Place of birth: Oakland

Year arrived in Vallejo: 2006, 2015

Occupation: Medical student at Touro University California

Languages: English; varying levels of Thai, two Filipino languages, and Spanish

What is your most important contribution to Vallejo? Working with a variety of organizations to help bring HIV/AIDS education and health screenings to communities, and participating in Trans Day of Remembrance, osteopathic manipulative

medicine, mobile diabetes education and health screenings for underrepresented minorities in Vallejo. I also helped incorporate social justice and cultural humility into Touro University California's mission statement and program learning outcomes.

What have you done during the pandemic to help others? I created and ran a professional health course focused on LGBTQIA+ and gender affirming health issues. I have also worked in the emergency room and ICU to provide care for patients who are alone and suffering in the hospital because of COVID-19, as well as their families.

What is one pandemic silver lining? That human beings are resilient and evolving, and we are able to recognize health disparities in communities of color and work together to address them.

What is your special talent? Coming from a multi-ethnic background and a low-income neighborhood, and being a cancer fighter and survivor, I can empathize with other people who are suffering. With my ability to connect, I can deliver compassionate healthcare and offer reassurance to communities of color and lower socioeconomic groups. I am truly passionate about affirming all intersectionalities that make people who they are.

What is a special memory of Vallejo? I helped direct a 2-week Biotech Academy Summer Internship for local underrepresented minority high school students. The program was aimed at inspiring youth to explore the field of healthcare. Seeing children's eyes light up as they discovered opportunities in their own community was absolutely heartwarming. Patients as well as the next generation of healthcare providers need to see people like themselves in these fields.

What is a favorite place to hang out in Vallejo? Elev8 Training on Mare Island has a wonderfully diverse community of people who come together for gym sessions and classes. El Comalito Collective Cultural Arts Center showcases underrepresented artists in various media.

What is your favorite Vallejo community event? Día de los Muertos in downtown Vallejo.

What is your favorite food from a Vallejo establishment? I love the Purple Hulk with protein and ginger shots at Sunshine Smoothies & Coffee (off Wilson Ave).

What do you hope for in the next 10 years? I see myself as a physician working for underrepresented communities. I hope Vallejo will continue to flourish and continue on an upward trend, with local communities continuing to dominate and contribute back to the community.

What Vallejo resident do you really appreciate? Mario Saucedo from Solano Aids Coalition has been an amazing advocate for HIV/AIDS education, for the Latinx and LGBTQIA+ communities, and is an overall wonderful human to be around.