



THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE-ACADEMY FELLOWS

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DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF  
DIVERSE LEADERS AND ADVOCATES

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## CLASS OF 2015 ACADEMY HEALTH EQUITY FELLOWS



From left to right: Jessica Fuentes, Ozi Uduma, Juan Reynoso, Alhehli Cuenca, Francisco Espinoza, and Pang Vang





## **Alheli Cuenca**

Alheli Cuenca was born and raised in sunny Fresno, California. She graduated this year from Mills College with a B.A. in Political, Legal, & Economic Analysis with an emphasis in Legal Studies and a minor in Sociology. Alheli is passionate about education and is a powerful advocate. As a peer educator with the Mills College Diversity and Social Justice Resource Center, her passion grew and she focused her advocacy skills. As an established peer educator, Alheli spent time as a policy intern with Educators for Fair Consideration. Doing this work allowed her to see firsthand how community organizing and public policy advocacy can affect comprehensive legislation reform addressing social issues. Having learned that lesson, Alheli committed herself to the work of social justice. Upon completing her fellowship, Alheli plans to pursue a Masters in Public Policy and a Juris Doctorate to help her achieve the ultimate goal of bettering the world through public service. Alheli enjoys quiet activities and loves lounging with her cat, Lola, in her family's patio while listening to country music.

Last November, Alheli participated in a half-marathon, which came as a surprise to her family because she has never enjoyed running due to her asthma and growing up in Fresno -- not exactly the best combination. Thankfully her body was strong enough to complete the half-marathon, despite her failed attempts to actually train for it. This was a transformative experience for Alheli, as she experienced firsthand how powerful she was (mentally, emotionally, and physically) to stay motivated throughout the run and how liberating it felt to cross the finish line.

Since then, Alheli has made a commitment to herself to build her endurance so she can participate in future running events every year as a symbol of self-love and self-care.





## **Francisco Espinoza**

Francisco Espinoza is the oldest of four sons of two immigrant parents. Living as an undocumented youth provided plenty of challenges, and Francisco worked hard in school to make his family and community proud. After high school Francisco attended Citrus College, completed undergrad at the University of California Riverside, and most recently received his Masters of Public Health degree from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. Throughout his post-secondary education, Francisco was extremely grateful for the emotional and financial support offered by friends, family, and his community, including an online campaign that provided the tuition for his first quarter of graduate school.

As a Health Equity Fellow, Francisco is excited to develop the skills needed to work with communities to improve the intersections of health and environment. His commitment to improving health is personal and stems from inequalities he has experienced trying to access healthcare with his family. Francisco's parents, the foundation of this success, are like many immigrant parents: hard-working, selfless, and loving. His ultimate career goal is to practice medicine with principles of cultural humility and cultural competency so that children can have the support of their parents like he had from his.

During his spare time, Francisco enjoys learning life lessons from the sport of baseball. His favorite national park is Yosemite and he aspires to hike Half-Dome in the near future. When appropriate he strums the guitar, attempting to create melodies.





## Jessica Fuentes

Jessica Fuentes immigrated to the Bay Area from Puebla, Mexico at the age of four with her mother and younger sister. She is a proud product of the Hayward Unified School District and a first generation college graduate from UC Berkeley. The barriers she and her family faced in accessing health and higher education opportunities based solely on immigration status shaped Jessica into an immigrant rights leader. As an undergraduate, she advocated for undocumented student rights to higher education, volunteered at various Bay Area health organizations, and spent a semester in Washington, D.C. interning and researching the intersection between health and immigration policies.

During her time at Street Level Health Project, an Oakland-based community health center dedicated to improving the lives of immigrant communities, Jessica held multiple roles, from food program coordinator to community relations manager. Her most cherished role, however, was working one-on-one with community members and helping them navigate the health care system to find adequate and affordable resources for their immediate needs. She is excited to be part of the Health Equity Fellowship and looks forward to contributing over four years of direct community health experience to developing and improving policy solutions for marginalized communities.

Jessica plans to return to school in the near future to pursue a Master of Public Health. She loves spending Sunday afternoons with her family, playing board games, going salsa dancing, and traveling with her loyal companion, Eeyore.





## Juan Reynoso

Juan Reynoso is from Escondido, California and received a B.A. in Human Biology with a concentration in the Social Determinants of Health from Stanford University. Motivated by his immigrant family upbringing and the xenophobic political atmosphere of his hometown, Juan became passionate about addressing issues of social and economic equity, especially in how they relate to public health. He is one of the Health Equity Fellows at The California Endowment office in Los Angeles.

While at Stanford, Juan pursued this passion for public health by becoming involved in various research and service-learning opportunities. Juan co-led a community-based participatory research project to investigate how a farm-based summer camp intervention would affect socioeconomically underserved children's preferences for vegetables. Moreover, as part of an undergraduate honors thesis, he implemented a youth photovoice project in which he investigated the attitudes that low-income suburban youth have toward their food environment. Most recently, Juan was an intern at San Mateo County's Health Policy and Planning division, where he assisted in their countywide health equity initiatives and publications. In the future, Juan hopes to apply to graduate programs in public health and public policy.

Whenever Juan is not keeping up with current events and social media, you can find him running long distances, loving all things blueberry, or dancing ballet folklórico. He is an avid reader, pseudo-vegetarian, and enjoys nerding out to the Avatar anime series. Juan is looking forward to becoming an Angeleno and exploring all the parks and museums in the region.





## **Ozi Uduma**

Ozi Uduma is a graduate of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor; double majoring in Anthropology and Afroamerican and African Studies (graduating with Distinction). She was born and raised in Detroit, by way of Nigerian parentage. She is the former Co-chair for the Coalition for Queer People of Color and a former executive member for the Black Student Union. Ozi is passionate about celebrating lived experiences of everyone, especially women of color, and dismantling the shame that we were taught to embody because of said experiences.

When she is not working, Ozi loves to read, swim, dance Bachata, and spend hours on Tumblr and Netflix! Additionally, when not expressing herself using written and/or verbal language, Ozi expresses herself through Tumblr gifs. So, if you find any that she should add to her lexicon, please send them her way. No, seriously ... send them her way.





## **Pang Vang**

Pang Vang was born in Thailand and raised in Sacramento. As the eldest in the family, she held many responsibilities and quickly learned to be a self-advocator. Believing that education was the key to success, she overcame her obstacles and made it to her dream college, UC Berkeley. In 2013, she graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Integrative Biology and a minor in South and Southeast Asian Studies.

While at UC Berkeley, she served as the Education Coordinator of the Hmong Student Association and interned for the Asian Pacific Islander Recruitment and Retention Center. She also volunteered at the Oakland Children's hospital for the Hematology and Oncology Department. She became more interested in health policy after interning for the California Primary Care Association in summer of 2013, where she helped develop the beginning stages of a HIPAA compliance toolkit for community health centers. She is a professionally trained mental health interpreter and has assisted Hmong refugees in Thailand with their UNHCR applications during her travel abroad studies. Inspired by her work and life experience as a low-income, under-resourced refugee, she is passionate about health equity, community empowerment, and access to education in low-income population. In the Health Equity Fellowship, she hopes to gain more knowledge about health policy and advocacy through research and community organizing. In the future, she hopes to fulfill her dream of becoming a doctor.

Pang set her mind on becoming a doctor in the second grade, but at one point she wanted to be an actress and supermodel. After finding out that models are usually 5'7" or taller, while she was only 5'0", she finally gave up that dream and now considers learning how to take professional pictures. Her goal is to purchase a DSLR Camera and learn how to use Photoshop to enhance pictures. Once she achieves this, she hopes to build a photo documentary of the lives of Hmong families living in different parts of the world, from America to Southeast Asia, China, France, and even Latin America.

When Pang is not working or studying, she enjoys cooking and running at the park, especially along the Sacramento River. She also loves to just lay back and enjoy a thriller or action movie.

