

Alumni Spotlight Interview

Gary Yin, Class of 2003

Gary Yin is an alumni of Lowell High, **class of 2003**. Gary was born in Seattle, Washington. Like many Cambodian Americans, his parents immigrated to the United States as refugees seeking security away from the Khmer Rouge. Gary and his family came to Lowell, Massachusetts, when he was in second grade so that his father could receive his Masters in Education from UMass Amherst .



After arriving in Lowell, Gary enrolled at the Bailey Elementary School, and later attended the Daley Middle School. Gary recalls having a meaningful relationships with teachers at Lowell High, including hist history teacher, Ms. Roberts, and Spanish teacher, Mrs. Smith. He stated that **“there are many remarkable relationships I formed with educators...”** and teachers like Roberts and Smith encouraged him to lean into his favorite subjects, including history and current affairs.

When reflecting on his time at Lowell High, Gary remembers his academic struggle in school and his tendency to be an underachiever. **He expressed that if a student does not have a specific path that they are following in high school, it can be easy to “fall between the cracks” and lose track of what they are doing.** Gary also feels that it is difficult to engage students in school, especially with the lack of cultural connection. Even so, he appreciates the relationships that he was able to build with some of his favorite teachers.



Also while at Lowell High, Gary played football until an injury sent him to the sidelines. **Gary appreciated the discipline and team building skills he learned from football and just being on the field in general.** There are many things to like about Lowell High, especially the school's diversity.

From Gary's perspective, Lowell High's immigrant and diverse population makes the school what it is and exposes students to new cultures. **Gary feels that his experience at Lowell High has made him “more whole as a person”.**

After graduating from Lowell High, Gary attended Northeastern University, where he studied psychology. He was unsure about what he wanted to pursue, but he knew that he did not want to do what his parents were telling him to. Gary attended **Middlesex Community College, where he received his associates degree in business administration.** He kick started his career working in the medical field doing laboratory work and eventually found his career in banking. As now he is the Branch Manager at Eastern Bank, bringing over 8 years of experience in the banking industry.

The City of Lowell has always been able to draw Gary back home. Even after relocating, Gary knew he'd come back to Lowell where everything he knows is, **including his amazing friends and family.** Lowell made Gary who he is. As a community member, Gary seeks to **"increase a sense of vibrancy"** in the city. For

Gary, **Lowell has pride and identity, but the light of it is shined internally** and we as community members have the ability to showcase the the city.



Gary Yin found out about **Project LEARN** through his good friend, and Project LEARN Board Member, Narin Sinuon. He was introduced to the mission and influenced by Narin's involvement and support of the organization. Gary describes Project LEARN as **“unique to Lowell”** and wanted to be involved and make an impact. His advice to Lowell High alumni is **“give- give anything”**. His advice for current students is to **“get back up, if you fall and keep going.”**



On behalf of Project LEARN, we want to offer a big thanks for all the work he has done for the community and honor that he is joining our board to support our Lowell Students and the community. Looking forward to continuing working with Gary.



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