

## **Building a team of future women leaders teaches valuable life-skill lessons**

*Published in the April 11 – 24, 2018 Issue of Morgan Hill Life*

<https://morganhilllife.com/2018/04/07/guest-column-by-darice-wong-building-a-team-of-future-women-leaders-teaches-valuable-life-skill-lessons/>



Darice Wong

There's nothing quite like eating too much popcorn, laughing plenty, and organizing a community event to bring people together. At least, that's what I've discovered after six months of painstakingly planning the "Future Women Leaders Conference."

The event is finally here. In fact, it's Saturday, April 14, in Morgan Hill — and we are ready! It will feature incredible speakers, workshops, and panels that explore how young women can turn their thoughts into actions and become community leaders.

It was this same fundamental mission that spawned the Miss CEO Networking Fair that first took place in Morgan Hill last year. The six-hour event created by the club I've co-run for the past two years, Miss CEO Gilroy, invited women professionals to share their experiences with girls through keynote speeches and workshops.

Now, the "Future Women Leaders Conference" is the result of our collaboration with GirlUp, the Women's Advocacy Clubs of Sobrato and Live Oak high schools, and the Youth Action Council of Morgan Hill, with the assistance of AAUW, to bring the community together to uplift the voices of local young women.

Nita Singh Kaushal, founder and CEO of Miss CEO, will notably be the keynote speaker. Through Kaushal's organization, as well as her role as a Stanford lecturer, she is an avid promoter of youth leadership.

The conference will also consist of enlightening workshops in Social Justice, Confidence Building, Entrepreneurship, Presentations Skills and Bias in the Media. Lunch will follow, and the event will finish up with a riveting career panel consisting of women leaders with a variety of roles in the community.

While events like our conference aim to educate and encourage youth, I know that for our organizing team the planning process has been an education all its own. Each time we met, we bonded over the twists and turns that come with planning a major event.

I found that working with so many different perspectives has helped me practice essential organization and communication skills. It was particularly amazing to watch our team establish a dynamic where everyone's voice was equally heard and each person's input could be built upon. It's also shown me that at the heart of every effort is a common cause, and that this alone can unite even the most diverse people together.

Working on the conference has also proven to me that all experiences, good and bad, can build your skills and knowledge.

Looking back on my work with the Miss CEO Networking Fair brings me much fondness, but also a bit of horror when I remember how stressed I was. It definitely has spoken volumes to see that the mistakes I made before have become invaluable in guiding my decisions now.

I've learned countless lessons on this journey since the first time we put something together for the community. I've found the most powerful one is that good planning, clear communication, and teamwork will surely help take (most of) the stress out of any situation.

To get more information about the "Future Women Leaders Conference" please visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

*Darice Wong is a junior at Dr TJ Owens Gilroy Early College Academy. She is an ambassador for Miss CEO and the president of the Miss CEO Gilroy Club, which meets every other Saturday at the Gilroy Library. Darice enjoys advocating for STEM education and is interested in finding ways to combine social initiatives with computer science and art, her two favorite subjects.*

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