

# Face 4Ward: It's In the Arts - ODALC and under-served small businesses (Part 1)

March 4th, 2011 | By Vernita Naylor, Oakland Business Insight, Examiner.com

**As we celebrate life** what better way to commemorate it than through art. This month's series are about businesses that are using captivating ways to express life and pay it forward. How do you pay tribute to life?

**Oakland Digital Arts & Literacy Center (ODALC)**, a technology not-for-profit organization, located in Chinatown of downtown Oakland is helping underserved small business owners grow their businesses using technology. The social changes that Shaun Tai, Founder and Executive Director and Linda Poeng, Treasurer are making are astonishing. Oakland Digital sees every person as a small business and they are available to help.

**The operation of the organization** is based upon a dedicated team of volunteers from the Oakland Digital staff to the expert tech professional who donate 100% of their time. "Money is rarely the drive of a good team" says Tai. With quality, excitement, momentum, vision, drive and execution the organization is helping Oakland small businesses cross the divide by providing one-on-one computer education.

**Shaun Tai** has an extremely diverse background from starting the Oakland Digital; Executive Producer of Pushin' The Bay TV, a documentation on the history of the Bay Area hip-hop culture and creating an online campaign that exceeded 14 million viewers and designing an award-winning, green-building for affordable and sustainable second-unit housing in partnership with McCall Design Group to participation in the box-office success "The Fast and the Furious" as the co-founder of the award-winning automotive group that influenced the movie.

**Linda Poeng** is bilingual and tech savvy. As an owner of Visual Verbs, a creative firm specializing in event photography, she uses her creative and technical skills to help the vision of Oakland Digital. In being the treasurer of Oakland Digital she uses her major in corporate finance to oversee the accounting, finance and viability of the organization by assuring that the organization maintains its compliance regulations. Additionally, she is active with helping in the business development outreach and strategy of the organization.

**The main focuses** of Oakland Digital are:

- Bridging the Digital Divide – Digital Inclusion
- Community Development – Small Businesses & Business Promotion
- Cultural / Ethnic Awareness
- Economic Development / Revitalization
- Employment – Training & Equal Rights
- Internship & Job Referrals

Additionally, there is the Digital Literacy Classes taught by instructors of Pandora Radio, Yelp.com and Bandcamp.com; coaching for those that need hands-on assistance with using technology to increase their professional identity online and a computer facility that allows community members free internet, access and technical assistance. They also have a community blog, Inspire Oakland.com that honors the philanthropists in the San Francisco-Bay Area and highlight events, organizations, and resources for community members with an interest in social justice; design & technology and community & economic development to the green market.

'The bad economy is no longer an excuse, to fail or feel that they can't start a business, sacrifices must be made. If you can make it now, you can make it anytime' says Tai. Join Oakland Digital and see them in action on Friday, March 25, from 9:30am to 2:30pm, at the **"Social Media for Small Business: Online Marketing Symposium,"** held at Oakland City Hall, City Council Chambers. Register for free by visiting [www.oaklandsocialmedia.com](http://www.oaklandsocialmedia.com). For more information contact Linda Poeng at 510-435-2945 or email [linda@odalc.org](mailto:linda@odalc.org). To get involved, visit [www.odalc.org](http://www.odalc.org).

What are your thoughts about this topic? What other similar topics interest you? Subscribe to my page. Tell others. Contact Vernita Naylor [vernita@jabezenterprisegroup.com](mailto:vernita@jabezenterprisegroup.com).



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Oakland Digital Family  
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By Vernita Naylor

Oakland Business Insight Examiner

Vernita Naylor (aka JABEZ) is very diverse and versatile in topics from project management, procurement, marketing, non-profit structuring, image... [Read more](#)

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