



Joy Theanne Hurlburt

Joy identifies herself as Chinese by ethnicity, and American and Chinese by culture. She was born in China and lived in an orphanage until she was 18 months old and was adopted by her mother, Judith. She is now 16 years old and attends West Anchorage High School. She has participated in the Alaska Chinese Association events her entire life, including Chinese School, and dancing with the Chinese group at the Chinese New Year Celebrations for many years.

Joy loves music and adventure. She studies in gifted honors, AP, and IB classes and has earned varsity letters in cross country running, skiing, and track. Joy sings and plays piano, and has maintained above a 4.0 GPA. She loves to travel internationally, cook, do outdoor activities, watch videos, read, shop, and sleep.

In many classes Joy's taken, she's been one of few, or the only non-Caucasian student. She experiences and observes racism every day of her life, including snide, rude, ignorant remarks, fights in the hallway, and countless racist jokes. When Joy becomes aware of a hurtful or ill-informed remark, she brings attention to it. In classes and social groups, Joy speaks out against racism and calls people out on racist statements. She purposefully watches what she says, so as not to contribute to the already existing racist language within her surroundings. She writes, "by speaking out against racism, and challenging others to do so, I believe I live by the mission of the YWCA."

Joy empowers women by setting an example for her peers and the younger children she knows. She loves to babysit and serve as a role model to kids, especially other adopted Chinese children. She loves to see her friends and those around her succeed. She writes that she empowers women by, "setting an example of respect, maturity, balance, dedication, and determination as crucial aspects of the way I lead my life and make decisions. I have pride in my ethnicity and culture, and I have pride in the way I challenge myself and challenge others toward achievement."