

# 『走過春秋二十載，只因一顆服務心』

## --- 記亞洲民眾服務協會創會20週年 文:謝達豪

接上頁 但他們因為文化上的差異,再加上語言的障礙,儘管他們通過勤勞、學習、貢獻來爭取換來社會公認他們其中一員的機會,他們也難以瞬間讓社會明白到他們的出發點。雖然說着不同的語言,做着不同的事情,有着不同的工作,他們卻有同樣的信念,就是渴望自己和家人能夠在這自由土地上安居樂業。雖然說,微笑是對外界交流的最美語言。但從實際的觀點看來,能夠毫無障礙地與另一方交流起來,不管從時間上或是效率上來講,都會比較優勝。亞洲民眾服務協會的文化推廣項目則是為移民們開通文化交流大門的鑰匙,文化推廣項目是一個提供語言、文化交流輔助的主要通道,它設立的目的是為非英語人士提供口述翻譯、書面翻譯服務。同時,此項目也提供中文學習班、美術班、中國民族舞蹈班等文娛活動。此項目的翻譯人員乃受過專業訓練或已獲政府機關認可,通過此項服務,更名為非英語人士提供協助並且縮短了翻譯誤差的時間。中文學習班、美術班和中國民族舞蹈班主要對象為7至16歲的適齡學童提供中文知識教育、美術繪畫、和帶有中華文化的民族舞蹈,使在美國出生的華裔學童能夠透過這些活動更加親近了解自己的祖國。

亞洲人給予世人的印象是透過辛勤勞動而獲得自己的勞動果實,他們透過不懈的努力,憑著自強不息的勇氣,經歷堅毅艱辛刻

苦的過程,而達成成功。這個社會上,有誰不求人?儘管是自信強大,覺得自己完全有能力去做每一件事的人,他們都會有需要幫忙的一天,只不過是遲與早的問題。每當客戶到亞洲民眾服務協會諮詢或尋求幫助的時候,他們的眼裡都憧憬着一種無法用言語表達的希望,他們希望通過亞洲民眾服務協會得到他們所需所求的幫助,從而解決問題。這個也是亞洲民眾服務協會成立的宗旨,務求每一位客人都能在此機構所提供的服務範圍內得以相應的幫助。但幫助客戶的同時,亞洲民眾服務協會更希望客戶在接受幫助的過程中能夠學懂其解決問題之方法,並且通過自給自足獲取經驗,日後更名為社會貢獻出自己的一份力量。這個也是亞洲民眾服務協會自給自足項目設立的原因之一,自給自足項目是一個提供給亞裔非英語人士申請社區福利、公共事務教育(如投票選舉、公民入籍)等各方面的服務。項目經理黃蘇珊女士(Susan Wong)希望客戶能夠透過此項目學懂如何為自己申請或保障社會福利,在政府平等互利的機制下能夠獲得社會的公平對待。這個項目也為廣

大合資格的美國永久居民提供免費的公民入籍考試培訓班,凡是持有美國綠卡達到可符合申請公民入籍考試的認識,均可在克利夫蘭的亞洲民眾服務中心辦公室報名參加入籍考試培訓班。該培訓班由一名資深志願者陳仲光先生(Don Chan)任教,學員在課堂



內學習100條公民入籍考試試題和一些關聯的英文詞彙,以應付移民官的詢問和評核其英語水平。入籍培訓班開班以來,已有一定數目的學員通過了美國移民入籍考試,正式

成為美國公民。基於有部分的社會福利最低申請條件對象為美國公民,所以透過此學習班能夠更有效率地讓那些渴望成為美國公民的人士提供多一條渠道。此外,自給自足計劃也會為所有欲申請社會福利的人士提供免費申請服務,客戶可以透過預約時間,前來亞洲民眾服務協會辦理相關事宜,例如糧食券(Food Stamp)、家居能源補助(HEAP)、醫療保險(Obamacare, Medicaid, Medicare)等其他社會福利。過去的2013年,亞洲民眾服務協會的自給自足項目已為全俄亥俄州東北地區超過1千1百戶家庭申請了聯邦醫療保險。這是機構成立以來的一個戰績和考驗。

亞洲民眾服務協會這20年雖不能說是艱辛歷程,但回憶這段路程確實歷歷在目。從沒變有,從有變優,從優變更優,其員工都付出了不可否認的汗水。但他們堅信,只要他們一日是亞洲民眾服務協會的員工,他們都將盡自己的工作本份,全心全意地為華裔社區乃至亞太裔社區服務。亞洲民眾服務協會將秉承及堅持一直的使命,繼續提供優質服務。憑着他們的對客戶的責任和不向困難低頭的信念,亞洲民眾服務協會一定能夠與廣大客戶一起,攜手在這片祥和、自由、溫馨的熱土上寫下更光輝燦爛的一頁!

## Asian Services In Action, Inc. in Lakewood, Ohio By Joon-Li Kim

Cleveland has long welcomed immigrants from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. But recently, Cleveland has welcomed a very special group of people, not of immigrants but refugees fleeing violence and persecution from various Asian countries like Myanmar and Bhutan. Lakewood, in particular, has been an important staging ground for helping these refugees get accustomed to life in the United States.

Because these refugees often have very limited knowledge of the English language, they cannot communicate their needs. Asian Services in Action, Inc. (ASIA), a non-profit agency with offices in Cleveland and Akron, helps these refugees with everything from the simplest question, like how to get a library card, to the most complicated legal and medical

issues. Even though ASIA originally worked with refugee communities from Asian countries, the agency turns no one away and so now also works with refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, and Guatemala.

One of ASIA's services is a citizenship workshop. Volunteers work one-on-one or in small groups with refugees, helping them with their reading, writing, and interviewing skills. In these workshops, refugees who already have green cards but have limited English ability get extra help preparing for the citizenship test.

Kitty Leung, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Services at ASIA, runs a long list of programs, all in need of volunteers. At Emerson Elementary School, in Lakewood, Leung directs and teaches in an afterschool tutoring program for refugee children in grades 2-12. One of the greatest challenges for these children, who attend school in both Cleveland and Lakewood, is that they are given homework that is much above their English language capability and cannot ask their parents, who often have even more limited English ability, for help. Furthermore, refugee children arrive with varying levels of education from their home countries.

At Emerson afterschool program, volunteers work with these students twice a week, helping them with homework that ranges from second-grade reading journals to high-school chemistry and algebra assignments. Along with

homework help, these students also receive drug-prevention education and time management counseling. It typically takes a child 5-7 years to acquire fluency in a second language but for Leung, success is having refugee chil-



dren integrated with their mainstream peers, involved in their schools' extracurricular programs and happy.

During the summers, Leung also runs a

summer school for refugee children in kindergarten-12th grade. This program meets at Emerson Elementary School, Monday-Friday, for six weeks and helps the students retain and build upon what they learned during the school year. Volunteers work with staff in devising lesson plans, teaching classes, working with students one-on-one and in small groups. Volunteers often rave about their summer experiences. Liam Oznowich, a college student who taught playwriting to the high school students, says, "Not only did I love getting to know each of the students and watching their English reading and writing improve, but I also gained more confidence in my own teaching abilities. It was a pleasure to teach this class because the students were all engaged and genuinely interested in what we were learning, which made my own teaching experience so much more rewarding and memorable."

ASIA also offers many services for the adults in the refugee communities. Leung and her program assistant run a parenting program for the Burmese, Karen, Kareni, and Ch'in

populations. Meeting at either Faith Presbyterian Church or Madison Library, these parents are introduced to American culture, so that they are aware of the influences their children face. They are taught how to talk with their children about drugs, how to set boundaries, and other parenting questions that arise from being apart from the mainstream community.

In addition, because many of these refugees come from unstable home countries, Leung holds a women-only group to address issues of sexual or domestic violence. She is hoping to get volunteers who are open to working with racial and religious diversity to help organize sewing or knitting circles with these women-only groups as they work through their experiences and move forward. Leung is also in need of sewing machines and any supplies, from fabric and yarn to knitting needles and pins.

ASIA is always looking for volunteers in their wide range of programs. Whether you're interested in healthcare, legal services, teaching, women's issues, or even sharing a skill or trade, ASIA would love to share your expertise. If you are interested in volunteering with ASIA or donating any supplies, please contact Kitty Leung, [kitty@asiaohio.org](mailto:kitty@asiaohio.org) or 216-369-7616.

## The Marketplace Q & A by Mindy Xiong

**Q:** My husband and I do not work together in making decisions related to our family and he seems disinterested in doing so. What should I do?

**A:** Though our culture may support the role of one of the spouses in a marriage as the primary decisionmaker or leader of the family, husbands and wives who come together to work on a decision both open up the lines of communication and are able to respect each other's perspectives and roles in the partnership. Some decisions will be made by one spouse and some will be made by the other spouse, though there may be times when compromise, or coming to a mutual concession that involves the desires of both of the people, may be necessary.

We had talked about healthy and unhealthy communication in our last article and having healthy communication patterns is optimal. If you feel that you are able to discuss the matter safely, perhaps you can explain your position and begin the conver-

sation using the "I feel" model:

"I feel (feeling or emotion) when (type of behavior) because (reason)."

For example: "I feel confused when you do not talk to me about making decisions about our family because it seems that you are not interested in our family."

The "I feel" model helps reduce tension and conflict by keeping us from making direct accusations without stating our reason (for example, "You make me feel confused!" "You are irresponsible and not helpful at all!"). Once you start the conversation with your husband or wife, allow him/her to speak without interruptions and aim to listen. Remember also that he/she may need some practice with healthy communication if they have not learned how to do so.

Another suggestion would be to bring in a trusted person as a mediator - a neutral party who is able to facilitate the conversation between you and your husband and will remain neutral. It may be very difficult to

find a mediator, though, and people may not want to share their difficulties within the community. You can also find professional people who are also trained in providing counseling for marriage who are required by their profession to protect their clients' confidentiality. If you are interested in this, please send an email to [marketplacetalk@gmail.com](mailto:marketplacetalk@gmail.com).

If these do not work or you feel that starting the conversation is making your spouse even angrier or the situation become dangerous, you may need to seek additional professional assistance. Again, you can email me for some options.

NEED HELP? If you need help because you believe you are in an abusive or unhealthy relationship, you can call this number for more information: (216) 369-7616.

GOT A QUESTION?? Submit yours here at [marketplacetalk@gmail.com](mailto:marketplacetalk@gmail.com)!