

What South Cove Means to Me and My Family

As a sixteen year old Asian male, it has been over ten years since the South Cove Community Health Center has been part of my life. When I was six years old, my family and I moved from China to Massachusetts as immigrants in order to provide my brother and I better opportunities in life. With the minimal English in my family's arsenal, we were drowned by foreign words that we could not understand at all. In the first few weeks of coming to United States, we would visit Chinatown often in order to feel like we were at home. While the occasional visit to Chinatown may have provided us with a sense of familiarity, it was only a temporary sense as it we would have to go back home. My mother understood that English was essential in order to live comfortably in America, and strived to learn as fast as she could so she can provide for our family better.

Nonetheless, there were still many things that were extremely difficult to understand such as medical and government-related terms. When my mother's friend introduced us to South Cove, my parents were relieved to know that they would be able to receive health care from doctors that spoke Chinese. My parents immediately applied for assistance regarding medical insurance and social security, which helped us adapt easier in the United States. At South Cove, my parents were able to receive this assistance in Chinese, which provided them with a sense of community and ease as well as help them understand the whole process better. The staff at South Cove were able to help my parents step by step through difficult documents that would have been impossible to help fill out without their assistance. When me and my brother received health care, such as check-ups and dental visits, at South Cove my parents were able to understand if we had any issues thanks to the linguistic fluidity among the staff, who provided help with what medicine my parents needed to buy in case we were sick and English words to look for when buying over the counter medicine. If South Cove did not exist, we would have a difficult time going to a different hospital to receive health care, and my parents would not be able to fully understand everything regarding our wellbeing. At South Cove however, my family was able to make sure we were getting exceptional health care while being able to completely understand the details of a check up. The staff at South Cove were friendly and patient causing us to feel welcomed and brimmed with the sense of community.

Later on, after my mother learned a substantial amount of English, she applied and successfully got accepted as a dental assistant volunteer for South Cove. Under South Cove, she was able to practice and learn how to be a dental assistant, in the hopes to use that experience to find a job in the future. While working as an assistant, she was able to learn how to work in both Chinese and English as well as improve her general English skills. What South Cove did next, however, surprised my whole family. Due to her hard work and dedication as a volunteer, South Cove offered my mother a permanent job as a dental assistant. Based on the limited amount of jobs my mother could get as an immigrant that did not require excellent English, they would not necessarily have a sense of community and the benefits South Cove could provide. With this opportunity that South Cove gave however, my mother would be able to work with the same people she has been working with the whole time, but get paid and not have to spend time and look for a job elsewhere.

My mother worked at South Cove for over seven years, and then moved on to a different job to pursue other passions. However, while working at South Cove, she was able to become friends with all her coworkers, gaining a new circle of friends as well as being immersed into a new community of people. My mother sees South Cove as her second home, and her coworkers as a second family. The opportunity that South Cove provided to my mother is definitely one of the most impactful opportunities she was given, as it allowed her to work in such a familial community where she would not feel isolated because of her subpar English skills.

As I grew up and started to speak English fluently, South Cove's place in my heart didn't change. As my eyesight started to worsen, South Cove was there to provide me with a new pair of glasses so I can see clearly again. As puberty started to take its natural toll in my life, South Cove was there to provide medication that controlled my acne so I could look my absolute best. South Cove has been with me health related wise since I have grown from a tiny child to a young adult. While my whole family now understand English on a much higher caliber, South Cove is still our go to health care center as it has been there with us since our arrival to the United States, and essentially grew up with our family. The sense of community that South Cove provides can never compare to other establishments in our eyes and holds a significant spot in the heart of my family, as it practically changed our lives and watch us grow to where we are today.