

As the first-generation and first-born daughters of Asian immigrant parents, there needed to be an affordable and bilingually accessible healthcare center which my parents and myself could depend upon. The South Cove Community Health Center has been dear to my growth and well being and my family's as well. From my mother's earliest memories of receiving obstetric care before the birth of my twin sister and I to us, as teenagers, receiving family counseling during our coming of age years, South Cove's primary services have been and continue to be a beneficial impact on myself and my family.

America is evidently a diverse country that has been sought by Asian immigrants and other ethnicities as well. Many have risked leaving the comfort and familiarity of their native countries in pursuit of achieving a happier life, or the esteemed "American Dream". My parents belong with this group of people who immigrated to America as young adults to overcome poverty, seek new opportunities, and also establish a life in the promising United States. As young immigrants, they lacked the awareness, enrichment, and most importantly an education to establish financially stable careers in America. First and foremost, health is necessary wherever you may travel. This fundamental doctrine has been instilled to preserve humanity, and was also emphasized by prestigious poets like Ralph Waldo Emerson who once stated, "The first wealth is health." Thus, without first seeking proper healthcare, my parents, like many of the incompetent Asian immigrants, could not function in society. South Cove has various accessible locations especially located in the Chinatown area which was a safe haven for my parents upon their arrival to America. South Cove was the initial health care center that my parents resorted to.

One of the primary services provided by South Cove is obstetric care. My mother was just a young woman entering the age of 20 when she married my father and became pregnant with my twin sister and myself. There have been various points of my life when I contemplated if there was any other type of relationship as strong and affectionate as that of a mother's towards her children. South Cove eased my mother during her maternity experience with three childbirths. This impacted my mother and my family greatly, for my health has been assured by my mom's resources, which was mostly provided by South Cove. South Cove assisted my mother with the WIC program, referred her to other useful assets for motherhood, and most importantly, South Cove has multiple strong connections to hospitals in the Greater Boston area which helped my mother with successful child deliveries. This service was crucial for the wellbeing of my mother and my siblings during prenatal care. Also, it was very difficult for my parents to establish financially stable careers simultaneously with trying to assimilate to life in America, therefore South Cove acted as a great reference for other beneficial programs such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). This USDA funded program further helped with the nourishment of my family and myself.

As we moved further into my life, South Cove has always provided my primary care. My pediatrician and I have a close relationship in which she understands my family and tries her

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best to also act as a liaison between the occasional language barrier that my immigrant parents and I have. The primary care I have received from my pediatrician has helped tremendously from relieving emotional instability to constantly ensuring I was physically healthy as well. Asthma and severe pollen allergies was a condition that I struggled with as child, however, I was able to overcome that with continual support and prescriptions from South Cove. Along with this overcoming of asthma, it motivated me to pursue athletics. During my middle school years and even currently in high school, I have been continually active in varsity sports like volleyball and basketball. South Cove has allowed me to be able to participate in such physical activity with accurate physical check ups and also helps to address any physical issues as well.

Many people can see that physical stability, however, functional depression and emotional instability is often overlooked. South Cove helped alleviate such emotional stress that I experienced, being the trustworthy and reliable health provider it has always been. The main service provided was family and individual counseling. This counseling was often more reliable than the guidance counseling provided in school. In the school setting, most counselors were American and could not fully understand the cultural aspect of being Asian American. South Cove was able to help me come to a realization of individualism and accepting who I am, what my ethnicity is, and especially helped to understand the nature of my parents and my upbringing. Also, the bilingual asset of my counselor at South Cove contributed greatly to the ease of communication during therapy sessions with my parents.

Another service provided by South Cove that I have been greatly impacted by and appreciative of was general dental care. I am a firm believer of attaining absolute happiness in life and a confident smile is the best way to prove such happiness. The regularly scheduled dental cleanings and experienced staff have inspired me to possibly pursue a career in dentistry. My understanding of dentistry was further enhanced after South Cove referred me to Tufts Dental School for orthodontic care. I am very grateful for the genuine smile I wear today after wearing braces for two years. This transformation allowed me to be more responsive and interactive in my life.

The confidence I gained and appreciation of my culture has motivated me to be more and do more. With reference to such ambitions of being civically engaged in my Asian community, I felt entitled to work with other Asian community serving organizations such as Quincy Asian Resources Inc. and Chinese Progressive Association. The involvement with these organizations further inspires me to an asset for my Asian community and improving society as a whole.