

Brrringgg! I hear the shrill of the telephones going off at the front desks as I walk through the front door of South Cove Community Health Center on Holmes Street in Quincy. I hear the exuberant squeals of young children and the thought-provoking conversations of adults and elders and I see the grins that extend from ear to ear on everyone's faces. Before I can take another step, I am immediately greeted by the friendly and welcoming staff members in the familiarity of the Chinese language, something that makes me feel like I am right at home. And that is exactly what South Cove is to me: a second home.

Ever since I was a child, I have felt the welcoming sense of home and community as I step through the front door of the clinic. A doctor's office, typically a place where children fear, was not something scary to my five year old self. Rather, it was a welcoming and warm place; it was like a sanctuary, surrounded by caring and charismatic staff members. It was where I went for my annual physical exams and sick visits. From mild colds to more serious infections and illnesses, there was no doubt in my mind that I would be well taken care of at South Cove.

However, to me, South Cove is not just a clinic in which I get my physical examinations and treatments for illnesses. It is my second home, a place where I go to visit the people I know and love—people that I have known since I was a child. Although at first various staff members would only recognize me because my mother works there, we have formed very close bonds since then as they learned more about me and I about them. As I hear about each individual's story, I am captivated and amazed by their dedication to the clinic and motivation for working there. For many years, I have volunteered alongside them at the Chinese New Year and August Moon Festivals in Quincy, and even outside the clinic, it is evident that each and every member truly cares about not only their patients, but also the well-being of all citizens in our diverse community. Through these events and other SCCHC events, such as the annual Christmas party and 40th anniversary gala, I

have had the privilege of meeting members from the Washington Street and South Street sites, and just like those from Quincy, they are just as dedicated and passionate about what they do.

Throughout the years, I have formed relationships with these people who have become my second family, and every time I attend an SCCHC event or visit the clinic, I feel more and more at home.

The sense of familiarity and belonging at South Cove has truly made it my second home, a place where I learned many life lessons and found inspiration for my future goals. For the past four years, I have had the opportunity to volunteer at South Cove in several departments. From taking calls at the front desk to helping in the intake room to assisting in pediatrics, I was able to work with various staff members who showed me the ropes at each position. Volunteering here has shown me the tremendous impact South Cove has on the Asian and Asian-American community. In a society dominated by the English language, it is often difficult for those who are not fluent in English to obtain necessities, including adequate health care. South Cove breaks these language barriers and provides a link that connects people with their roots. Many staff members I know speak more than one language, allowing them to relate to patients of all different backgrounds. My mother speaks Cantonese, Mandarin, English, and Vietnamese, and seeing her help a multitude of patients is extremely inspiring. My experiences volunteering at South Cove have inspired me to continue being part of the community that is dedicated to helping a diverse population. I have learned the importance of learning different languages and their essential role in our society today. Though I can only speak three languages as of now, I am passionate about learning more languages and learning more about different cultures so that I will be equipped with the abilities to aid others in need. South Cove has helped me realize that no matter where the future takes me, I am certain that I will continue to help others and give back to the community that has given me so much.