

During my times visiting and volunteering at various hospitals and medical centers, I realize that they are not only a place for care, but also a place for resources. South Cove Community Health Center, despite its name, is more than just a health center. It is a community, serving hundreds everyday. It is a community that my family and I have been part of since our arrival in Boston in 2007. We were well received, and I recall my family talking to a specialist about health insurance, which is fundamental to our lives in the states. My family is grateful to have been given the opportunity to join the greater community of South Cove. The impact that this community has on me is unparalleled. The pediatric department and Brighton/Allston After School Enrichment (BASE) Program changed my life and helped me grow as a person. It was in these two places where I fell in love with science.

One of my earliest exposures to science was in the pediatric department in Chinatown's South Cove clinic. As an immigrant in a new country, new city, it is important for me to be attentive to details. I recall coming to South Cove for the first time, disconcerted by the various medical instruments, but amazed by the posters of lungs. Intrigued by the multitude of bronchioles and minute alveoli, I went to the library to learn more. The influence to my interest in science did not end there, however. I remember my pediatrician at the time, Dr. Gu, talking to me about adolescent health. It was in his office where I learned about the skeletal system and analyzed my growth chart. Dr. Gu praised me for my knowledge of minerals and bones. Because of this, my interest in the human body and medical science was kindled. Such small things can be so impactful on one's impression.

As time progresses, I discovered BASE. BASE became an integral part of my life. Not only did the teachers equip me with useful knowledge to succeed in my future endeavours, but they also pushed me to explore the world with courage and confidence. They helped to build the person I am today. Lifelong friendships were made, camaraderies were strengthened, my sense of citizenship was built. Giving back to the community is something that BASE has engraved into me. I not only have the honor to return as a graduate to volunteer and be an older role model, but I also have sought other volunteering responsibilities inside and outside of school. I am an avid member of the community, and I contribute to the community on a regular basis through my service at Brigham and Women's Hospital and other places.

Five years later, many memories of BASE are still fresh in my mind. When I was in 4th grade, I was mesmerized by the roller coaster engineering project. I vividly remember how placing a marble at different heights will divert the marble into different tracks. It was just a simple demonstration of the conservation of energy-- as I come to know it today-- but it truly piqued my interest in physics at the time. The numerous bridges that my peers and I have built, the many miniature "flying machines" that were flown, BASE has really played a seminal role in developing my future ambitions. These projects didn't just teach us how to merely build a prototype, but how to concoct, how to plan, and how to redesign. As a matter of fact, my

experience at BASE is actually one of the reasons why I chose to pursue physics over the popular chemistry course in my school, and perhaps even study it in college.

One of the most unique features about BASE is that it is also a kitchen. We live in a generation where education is emphasized extensively, and arts and crafts are often put behind. Cooking in BASE is one of my favorite memories of the program. It taught me patience and appreciation of the little things. Living in a first world country, we should be grateful that we have ample to eat everyday. These types of experiences are unprecedented in any other after school programs, and I am especially thankful for these unique experiences and the friends that I have bonded with.

Although my family's first few years in the US were difficult, South Cove provided us with a sense of community. The pediatric department has introduced me to science, and BASE has truly shaped my life in many aspects. Not only did BASE contribute to my academic success, but BASE also taught me valuable life lessons that I will carry on for the rest of my life. The word "community" resonates through the South Cove Community Health Center, and I'm truly grateful that it is something I am a part of.