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Eternal Spring

IN CELEBRATION OF SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

By Gerrye Wong

THE TITLE OF THIS BOOK IS "ETERNAL SPRING." The Chinese translation is Chuen Yuen. All the seniors profiled in this book have lived rather hard lives but despite their hardships, radiate with love and hope for a better future. By reading their stories, I am reminded that indeed, "hope springs eternal."

Eighty-three-year-old Robert Lim, whose picture appears on the cover, personifies this everlasting hope and selfless love. He is the inspiration for many of Self-Help for the Elderly's staff, especially me.

This book is dedicated to all the seniors that we serve. Thank you for supporting Self-Help for the Elderly and "Eternal Spring."

Anni Chung, Executive Director, May 1996

THE NUMBER OF SENIORS IN THE GREATER SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA has increased dramatically since the 1960s when Self-Help for the Elderly was established as a War on Poverty Program. Today, 23 percent of San Francisco's population is aged 55 or older, with the majority female. Individuals age 85 and older are the fastest growing segment of the overall senior population. Fifteen percent of the City's elderly are considered "frail" and over a third live alone with 16 percent near or below poverty levels.

The tremendous growth of seniors and Asian/Pacific Islanders in the San Francisco Bay Area mirrors statewide and national trends. Asians alone currently comprise nearly 30 percent of San Francisco's total population and 28 percent of the City's senior population. Tremendous growth is also reflected in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, where large concentrations of Asian Pacific seniors reside.

These numbers point to an increased need for organizations like Self-Help for the Elderly that provide essential services for seniors, including affordable housing, health care, access to services and transportation.

The Editor

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By Gerrye Wong

Self-Help for the Elderly
San Francisco, California

Eternal Spring

In Celebration of Self-Help for the Elderly's 30th Anniversary

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SIR RUN RUN SHAW C.B.E.

SHAW BROS. (H.K.) LTD

Friends and Supporters of Self-Help for the Elderly:

First, I want to express my heartfelt congratulations to Self-Help for the Elderly on commemorating its 30th Anniversary Celebration this year with the publication of "Eternal Spring."

The Agency's vision in the past 10 years in building a bridge between the two communities of Hong Kong and the San Francisco Bay Area will ensure that senior citizens in the United States enjoy a better quality of life because of the support of many generous people from both sides of the Pacific Rim.

The Lady Shaw Senior Center and Housing Complex in San Francisco stands as a symbol of the Agency's mission—to provide quality housing, health and social services to seniors who need them.

Congratulations on a job well done and my best wishes for every success in the continuance of the Self-Help for the Elderly's good work.


Run Run Shaw

Clear Water Bay Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Preface

AS THE CHINESE SAYING GOES, “THE JOURNEY OF 10,000 MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP.”


Self-Help for the Elderly’s (SHE) 30-year quest for a safe and healthy environment for seniors has taken us through many peaks and valleys. Starting in 1966 with a handful of staff in a cramped office at Old Chinatown Lane, SHE’s presence now encompasses three major Bay Area counties—San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara.

I am truly grateful to work with such wonderful seniors, staff and volunteers. Together, they have forged a strong alliance of faith that has helped SHE withstand the test of time. Although the difficulty of balancing quality care and resources with the pressure of expansion has always been present, the spirit of love and determination from our board members and volunteers has inspired SHE to push the frontiers in serving a wider senior population. With the recent opening of the Adult Day Health Care/Alzheimer’s Center, SHE can now proudly offer a full range of eldercare services to independent and frail constituents.

The idea of publishing an oral history has been on my mind for a long time as the most appropriate way to salute the lives of our seniors during SHE’s 30th year of service. “Eternal Spring” is a collective story told of love and with love. The stories of our seniors struggling through pain and hardship but emerging with resilience, hope and devotion are valuable lessons for all of us.

This book would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the publication committee: Gerrye Wong, Adrienne Pon, Sue Wong, Michael Chan, Dr. C.J. Huang, Rosalyn Koo, Dorothy Yip and all the SHE staff interviewers. I convey my deepest appreciation to them and to our benefactor, Pacific Bell.

SHE’s vision for the 21st Century is to serve as a national and international model of quality, comprehensive services for seniors. As we take the first step of a new journey, we anticipate many challenges and difficult roads. But along the way, let us carry the legacy of love and caring established by our seniors.


Anni Chung, Executive Director
Self-Help for the Elderly

Acknowledgments

WHEN I WAS APPROACHED ABOUT WRITING STORIES FOR SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, I felt there would be no greater tribute than to chronicle the lives of their amazing seniors. I knew there were many stories to be told. As a Self-Help for the Elderly Foundation Board Member visiting many of the Centers in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, I saw the grateful faces of people lining up for perhaps their only nutritional meal of the day and witnessed the happiness of these seniors as they learned how to dance or sing Chinese Opera. I watched the eager expressions of those who were so anxious and eager to learn English and shared in their tears of joy as they prepared to be American citizens.

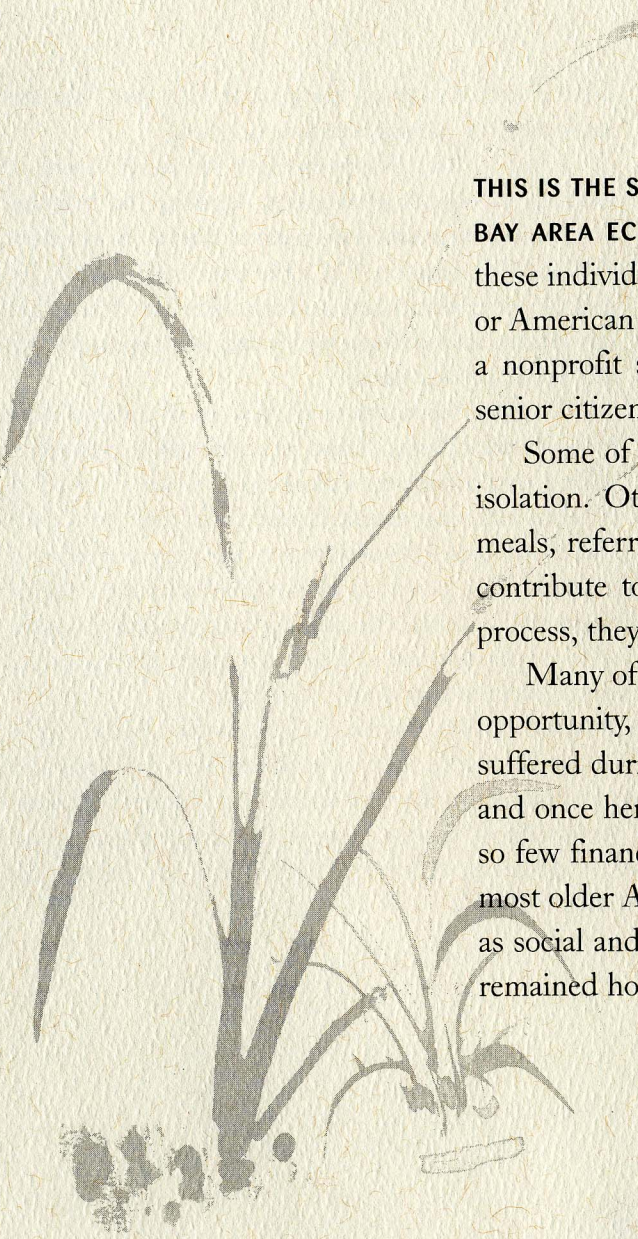
Thank you to Rosalyn Koo and Anni Chung, longtime and dedicated leaders of Self-Help, who invited and inspired me to write the stories behind the faces. And to the tireless staff members who interviewed the seniors so we could learn about their lives and dreams. The trust and openness the seniors showed in telling their stories is indicative of their love for the Self-Help staff. Many of the seniors were monolingual, so it was a double task for the staff to interview in Chinese and then make notes in English.

Thanks go to Michael Chan who took loving care in photographing the seniors at their homes or at the Self-Help centers. Special acknowledgment to Dorothy Yip who coordinated the photography sessions and collected vintage photos to accompany each senior's profile. And many thanks to our editor Adrienne Pon who shaped and streamlined the stories and words, and whose company, Pacific Bell, sponsored the printing of this book. Admiration and heartfelt gratitude to Graphic Designer Sue Wong, who put it all together with her creativity and talent.

A last but most important thank you must go to the 30 seniors who so willingly shared their personal stories of struggle and hope. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Self-Help for the Elderly, let us salute this organization and its visionary leaders for the positive difference they have made in so many lives.

Gerrye Wong, May 1996

Introduction



THIS IS THE STORY OF 30 SENIOR CITIZENS WHOSE LIVES IN THE GREATER SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA ECHO THE STRUGGLES OF OTHER AMERICANS IN THE 20TH CENTURY. Each of these individuals came from different circumstances and experiences as new immigrants or American citizens. All eventually found their way to Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE), a nonprofit social service organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for senior citizens and empowering them to help themselves and others.

Some of the seniors found new families at SHE after facing years of loneliness and isolation. Others came with specific social needs to be met through SHE's housing, meals, referral, nursing care and counseling programs. A few of the seniors wanted to contribute to the communities they grew up in by volunteering their time—in the process, they ended up gaining new friendships and a renewed sense of purpose.

Many of the seniors profiled in this book came to America in search of freedom and opportunity, as other immigrants have done in the past and continue to do today. They suffered during times of political turmoil and extreme poverty in their mother countries and once here, faced additional social, economic and cultural barriers. Some came with so few financial resources that they were forced to find low-paying jobs at a time when most older Americans were contemplating retirement. They faced discrimination as well as social and linguistic isolation. But whatever the difficulties were for these seniors, all remained hopeful and persevered in their dreams for better lives.

Woodrow “Woody” Chan

LOOKING BACK OVER THE PAST 77 YEARS, Woody Chan doesn't have to give much thought to the most important influences in his life: going to China while serving in the Air Force during World War II, raising a family, and being associated with Self-Help for the Elderly.

Following Woody's 1936 high school graduation in New York City, his father planned to bring him to China. However, the Sino-Japanese War prevented their trip, and when his father died suddenly, Woody and his older sister had to work to help their mother raise her family of five children. A restaurant worker by day and an optometry student by night, young Woody faced hard times until the 1942 draft that finally led him to China.

As a member of the Flying Tigers 407th Air Service Squadron Medical team, the famous all-Chinese unit, Woody was sent to work in small U.S. military dispensaries throughout China. He recalls, "During the two years spent working in China, many times I would be the only trained person there to treat the people, so however I could help the patients, they would be ever so grateful and would look up to our unit with much respect."

After his discharge from the service, Woody began raising a family. Perhaps because of his father's absence, he keenly felt the responsibility of providing for his own family. Although he earned his optometry degree and license, he chose to work for a guaranteed

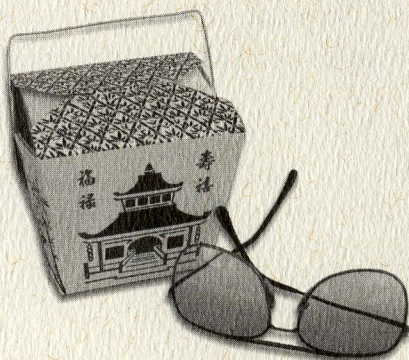


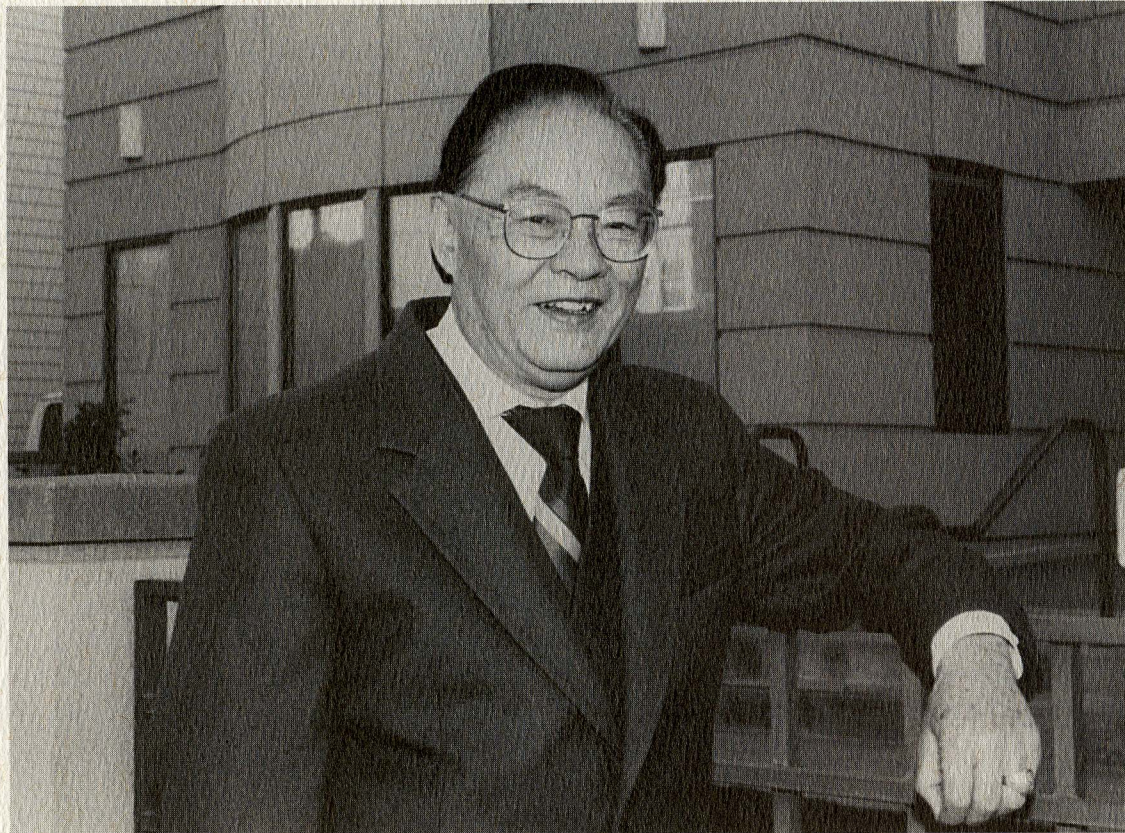
income with an optical company rather than face the uncertainty of opening a private practice.

Later in life, Woody fulfilled his secret desire of working in upscale restaurants, learning the business from busboy to assistant manager at Trader Vic's in New York and Washington, D.C. He eventually opened his own *Orchids 7* restaurant, working there for 10 years before retiring and settling near his daughters in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

It tickles Woody to recall how he discovered Self-Help for the Elderly. "I had been referred to Self-Help while I was looking for a place to live when I arrived in San Francisco. They had none available, and I wandered into their lunchroom. There I saw over 100 needy seniors enjoying an afternoon of eating and comradeship, and I was so impressed with the caregiving of the kitchen staff, I innocently asked if they needed any extra help. I was on the job the next day and 13 years later, I am still in the lunchroom serving their midday meals," he laughs.

"If I hadn't wandered into that lunchroom that first fateful day in 1982, no doubt my life would have been wasted with frivolous and selfish pleasures. Instead, my days are filled helping others who have become my friends. Most important, we're like a family that enjoys coming together and seeing each other. That's why I am spending so much time with Self-Help."





陳偉男

*SHE volunteers dedicate more
than 1,000 hours a week
at 10 different meal sites.*

Chiu Sit Mui Lan

JUST AS SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY (SHE) HAS AGED WELL SINCE ITS BIRTH 30 YEARS AGO, so has 98-year-old Chiu Sit Mui Lan who was one of the social service agency's first clients. Mui Lan came to SHE when it was first established in the heart of San Francisco's Chinatown. She has always been known as a kind friend to others in the daily lunch program, sharing her snacks, drinks, chewing gum and canned fruits.

Born in 1897 in Huaxian, a village in Guangdong province, Mui Lan married her husband while in her 20s, but he unfortunately passed away after only three years of marriage. Sponsored by her sisters, she came to America in the 1940s, initially living in the southern part of the United States and eventually moving to San Francisco to stay with a cousin.

Without children nor many relatives in the area, Mui Lan belongs to the Fa Yuen Benevolent Association. "Because I have no one to look after my arrangements when I die," she says, "I have given my extra money to my family association for my funeral expenses. I know the family association will take care of me."

Although she has no nearby relatives, Mui Lan likes to call anyone with the same last name her relative. When she is introduced to

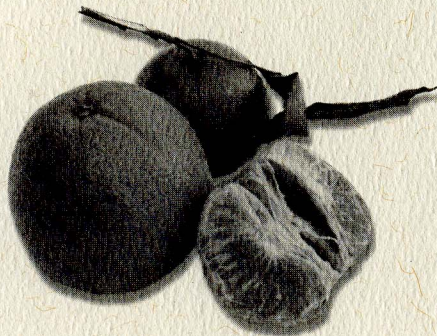


others, if their surname is Chiu, she immediately tells them they are related in some way. Perhaps this is her way of feeling connected to people.

When Mui Lan turned 90, she was honored by SHE and presented with a pendant she cherishes and wears daily. For the past five years, she has had problems walking due to painful arthritis in her legs and can no longer come to Chinatown to do her daily shopping. Now forced to stay at home, Mui Lan feels very lonely. She wakes up early in the morning and sits in the hallway to watch other people. By 4 p.m., she gets tired and goes to her room to eat dinner alone, then falls asleep around

6 p.m. Mui Lan's meals are simple—only rice, fruit and steamed fish. She loves oranges and tangerines and drinks only cola and sugar cane juice three times daily. Remembering the old days in China, she still does not drink water because she feels that water is not clean.

Mui Lan once told a social worker that she would have liked to have gone back to her own country to visit for one last time. Perhaps she remembers the Chinese saying, "The leaves fall to the root eventually." In the meantime, as Mui Lan clutches her pendant close to her heart, she is most grateful to know that Self-Help for the Elderly is there for her.





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薛
梅
蘭

*In 1991, Lady Shao Senior Center
won an Urban Design Award
from the California Council of the
American Institute of Architects.*

Chow Pik Ying

CHOW PIK YING WAS 56 YEARS OLD WHEN SHE CAME ALONE TO AMERICA. After problems arose with her only son and his family, she decided to journey here under the sponsorship of her brothers and sisters. She has never regretted that decision and feels grateful to her family who provided for her in this new land.

Born in Kaiping, China, Pik Ying was raised by a widowed mother who made a living as a tailor. She and her siblings were very close, having to fend for themselves while their mother worked hard. "I was very active when I was young and feel very lucky that I was able to attend school in my village," she recalls.

Pik Ying's story is much like many women of her era. When she was 18, the village matchmaker arranged her marriage to a Canadian Chinese who had lived most of his life in Canada and had been sent to China by his father to study Chinese and marry. After two years of marriage, Pik Ying gave birth to their son and just a little over a year later, her husband returned to Canada. That was the last time they were ever together.

"Many women in the village shared a lonely plight such as mine, raising children in a husband's absence. Most would hear periodically from husbands who would send money to help their impoverished families," Pik Ying explains. When American immigration laws were loosened, some of the men sent for their wives to join them overseas, but this was not the case for Pik Ying.



Fleeing to Hong Kong with her son when Japan invaded China in the late 1930s, Pik Ying lost complete contact with her husband after the war. In the meantime, she opened a meat store and made enough to raise her son alone. Later, she worked in her brother's sewing factory in America. Upon retiring in 1972, a friend told her about Self-Help for the Elderly and she became a regular program participant. "I spent a lot of my time volunteering in the Nutrition Program and helped with the serving of the lunches to fellow seniors. I also enjoyed the arts and crafts classes and made many new friends. My life became meaningful again as I was keep-

ing busy," she remembers.

Two years ago, Pik Ying suffered a stroke that made her limbs weak and limited her activities to home and the nearby neighborhood. Usually active and outgoing, she soon became depressed with this solitary existence and lost her appetite and zest for life. However, she was able to participate again when Self-Help for the Elderly started a transportation program a year ago. Now she is driven daily to the Lady Shaw Center where she attends English classes and enjoys the company of her friends.

Although she walks very carefully with the aid of a cane, Pik Ying always volunteers to help. "My life is worth living again," she says with a big smile.





周
碧
英

*The Golden Gait Walkathon
attracts over 1,500 participants,
ranging in age from babies in strollers
to seniors in their 90s.*

Chui Yau Kwan

"THE NIGHTMARE OF THE EXTREME HARDSHIPS MY FAMILY SUFFERED DURING THE FAMINES of the early '60s followed by the 'Great Leap Forward' political campaign still torture my memories," admits Chui Yau Kwan when asked about his life in China. "I was sent to jail and labor camps on several occasions during the class struggles of the Cultural Revolution because I was a primary school teacher. Finally, the sheer poverty and hopeless future for my children forced us to try to migrate out of the country. My wife was the first one to escape to Hong Kong by swimming and walking to the border in 1962."

Yau Kwan waited 18 years to be reunited with his wife. Although his sister was a U.S. citizen and applied to sponsor his move to America in 1972, China was then enforcing a closed-door policy which prohibited migration out of the country. It wasn't until 1979, when diplomatic relations with the United States improved, that he was allowed to leave. The Chuis moved to America in 1980 but unfortunately, their son and daughter had to stay behind and did not join their parents until many years later.

Yau Kwan proudly points out that he has kept the only job he has ever had since arriving in the United States—that of a Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) housekeeper. "When I first came here, people thought I was too small and weak at 93 pounds to do any type of work



and I couldn't find a job for almost one year. Enrolled in an English class at an adult school, I heard Ms. Anni Chung one day tell about an employment program. I immediately signed up for enrollment in the house-keeping training class and that was the first inkling I had of Self-Help for the Elderly."

SHE is like a big family to Yau Kwan and his gratitude is reflected in hard work, loyalty and devotion. When the Lady Shaw Senior Center opened five years ago, he was recruited to serve as full time meal site janitor. Since 1981, he has also worked a second job caring for a 95-year-old lady four hours every Saturday.

He is proud of his family's accomplishments and hard work. "When we first came to America, we lived in a small room in Chinatown where we cooked and slept in the same place. Chicken wing tips were our favorite protein source because I could buy it for 10 cents a pound," he remembers. Today, three generations of the Chuis live peacefully together, achieving their goals and dreams of financial security and prosperity after years of poverty, political oppression and suffering.

Now a U.S. citizen, 67-year-old Yau Kwan plans to work as long as his health permits. Content with his life and ever grateful to the organization that gave him his start in America, he describes his relationship with SHE like this, "No Self-Help, no me!"





徐有昆

*The Social Services Unit serves
8,500 predominantly low-income clients
who are limited-English speaking
or monolingual Chinese.*

Felix Daguro

FELIX DAGURO REMEMBERS HIS EARLY LIFE AS ONE OF HARD WORK IN THE SUGAR CANE FIELDS OF HAWAII. As he tells it, "My family moved from the Philippine Islands when I was 12 to Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands. There we began a very hard life planting, cutting and carrying sugar cane on the plantations. For days of hard labor in the fields working under hot humid conditions, we were paid a mere \$18 a month."

Felix recalls that families living on the plantations were segregated by nationality, with humble housing dormitories for Filipino, Japanese and Portuguese workers. "Everything was free for us but we had no beds to sleep on, so we were packed in rooms sleeping on the floors," he adds.

"In those days, immigration rules stated one could only work three years in Hawaii before your time was up. Transportation was already paid for, so many of us went back to our native countries. After only five years, I brought my father back home to the Philippines in 1925 and stayed there until I was 21, then I decided to return to the Hawaiian sugar cane fields no matter how difficult the work was."

Returning to the fields was indeed hard, but even when Felix's brothers returned to the Philippines to get married, he remained in Hawaii. When he finally left for San Francisco 40 years later, Felix

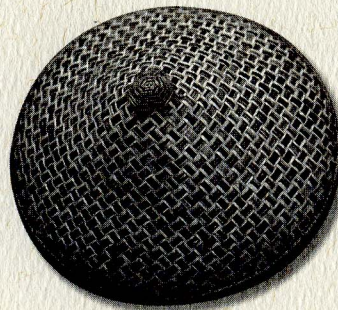


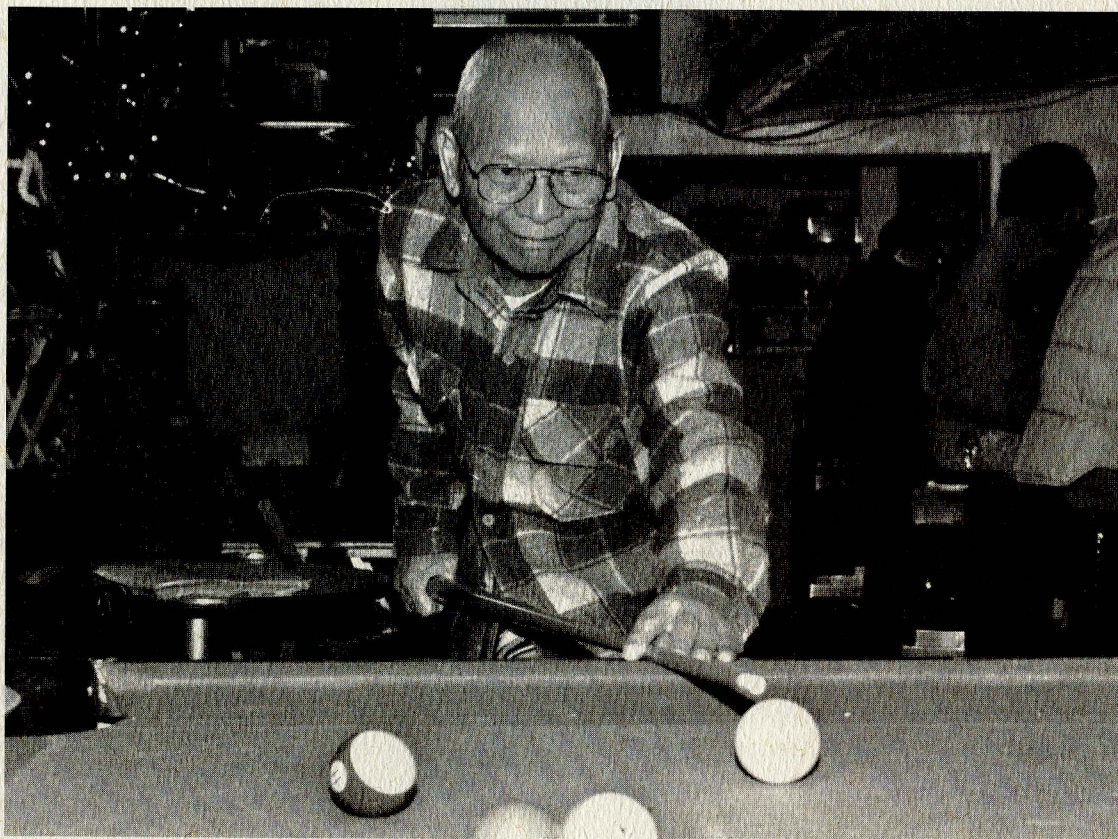
remembered something his father had once said. "If you stay in Hawaii too long, you will die."

Felix found work as a longshoreman for the Port of San Francisco and spent his nights living with his fellow countrymen at the International Hotel until the controversial mass eviction of elderly tenants and eventual demolition of the building. Faced with being tossed out on the street with other potential homeless people, Felix spent his days going to Filipino barbershops and meeting friends at the pool hall.

In 1978, Self-Help for the Elderly opened the Manilatown Senior Center in the former Mabuhay Gardens. "I started going every day as there was always music, dance and lunch. What better place could a man be, surrounded by friends as they sang, danced and enjoyed many different programs. The Manilatown place has a punk rock night club during the evenings for dancing and bingo, and a pleasant place to sit around talking with friends during the day."

Felix is still going strong. He enjoys a sharp game of pool, but singing and dancing are still his favorite activities. Reno is also popular with him when Self-Help sponsors a field trip for the seniors. "What a far cry from those death-defying sugar cane fields where I spent so many of my younger days. I'm only 89 years old now, and I plan to live until 100!" says Felix.





*Each summer, the San Mateo Center
offers a unique cross-generational
and cross-cultural educational program
called "Link-Ages" where seniors and children
share and learn art, culture, music,
food and language.*

Henry Falk

LOOKING BACK ON HIS 92 YEARS, Henry Falk sees a life of hardship and struggle. Born in Marlow, Oklahoma, he remembers very cold winters and miserably hot summers.

His father, a German immigrant who traveled as an independent wheat thrasher in the American midwest, died when Henry was 12 years old. As the oldest son, Henry was left with the responsibility of supporting his mother and three siblings. "I remember my first job herding cows. I also picked cotton, which was hard work dragging a heavy sack of cotton, and we made very little money. I also cut broom corn, a plant which produces broom straw instead of corn seeds. To reap it, we had to put it between two rows of broom stalks, tabling them by breaking and crossing behind your back. Then we'd cut them off the stalk with a special knife. All this done in the heat of the Oklahoma sun," he explains.

One highlight of Henry's youth was being accepted into the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. Unfortunately, after only a year there, he was forced to return home because of congressional cutbacks. Henry then toiled at the Oklahoma Improve Seed Company but the dusty work proved to be detrimental to his health and he contracted tuberculosis. "I had to quit the seed company because there was a lot of dust in the sieves. When a dust bowl would hit



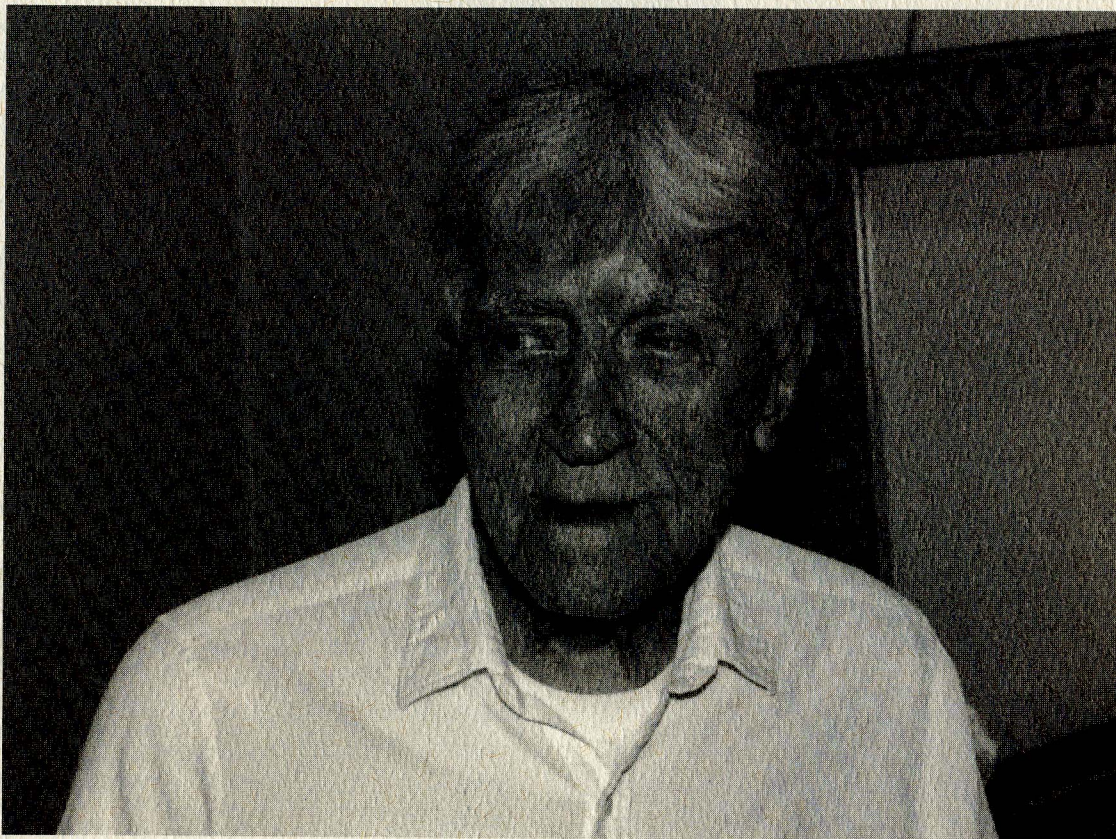
Oklahoma, it was terrible. One moment you would have a perfectly dry day, and then you would see a cloud arising above the horizon. It would be a cloud of dust and sand with strong winds blowing it all around."

The most satisfactory year of Henry's life was living in a Greek Fraternity House while he was enrolled at the University of Oklahoma School of Pharmacy. The most important aspect of his life, however, was his 36-year marriage to Mary Domenicali, who passed away in 1978. All that is left of Henry's family today is a 97-year-old sister and although he still feels close to her, she lives in Oklahoma and they have not been able to see

each other since 1979. Henry is not happy living alone, but he is grateful for Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) which ensures him home delivered meals and regular visits by social workers.

Though Henry has been poor much of his life, he gets along with social security checks and assistance from SHE. Suffering from breathing problems and severe arthritis in both legs, he tries to keep busy every day by doing a little bit of grocery shopping, even if he moves slowly. "The wolf is always out there ready to eat you up, so I guess it's not a very good life," he admits. But in spite of life's hardships, Henry tries to look on the positive side—he doesn't have any serious regrets and always tries to do his best.





*At an anniversary party,
friends and families of Sunrise Center's
residents joined in heated bidding for fresh produce
raised in the Center's garden. Winter melon went
for \$100 each, tomatoes for \$10
and corn for \$5.*

Jean Fong

WHEN 15-YEAR-OLD JEAN FONG GOT OFF THE SHIP THAT CARRIED HER FROM CHINA TO SAN FRANCISCO, she felt the loneliness of being separated from her family. After her mother's friend met her at the pier, Jean was taken to a poorly-kept apartment on the fifth floor of a church. The young girl knew she was about to face a life of hardship that she had never encountered before, for her life in China had been one of luxury where servants cared for her every need.

Jean is 90 now, and although those early traumatic days in America happened a long time ago, she remembers them vividly. Her uncle eventually took her to live with his family of 10 children in Los Angeles, where she attended grade school. Moving back to San Francisco during her high school years, she supported herself by working as a nanny for a captain's family in the Presidio. During this time, she lived in the attic but was treated like a member of the family. Her favorite memories as a teenager are of playing the piano, swimming and playing volleyball. As she recalls with pride, "My schoolmates always wanted me on their team so they could win!"

In 1934, Jean married her high school sweetheart Joe Fong, who was an exchange student from China. Joe earned \$90 a month in a Chinatown trading company while Jean worked in a sewing factory. During World War II, Jean was one of the first and few Chinese



women to work in the shipyards for the U.S. Defense Department. During the 1950s, she was happy raising her daughters, Mary Jane and Judy, and son, Lawrence. Today she is the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Jean feels she has had a complete and happy life. Her golden years as an 80-something-year old were spent participating in many of the Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) programs in San Francisco's Chinatown and volunteering at her church. She has been back to China nine times and is proud to have persuaded many of those in the Fong village to believe in Christ.

Jean now lives at Sunrise Center, SHE's residential care home in Santa Clara. "It was difficult for me to leave San Francisco, my home for most of my life," she says, "but here I have made many new friends and enjoy the daily programs. When I arrived, I was very ill and I can never forget the loving care the staff gave to help me recuperate and gain my strength back."

Although severe arthritis confines Jean to a wheelchair most of the time, she says being able to help others is what makes her happy and complete. "As a Christian, I want to continue to be a good testimony for Christ and to help people who need our help. If we all could feel this way, it might bring happiness and peace of mind for a long and healthy life."





方李少文

*Sunrise Center in Santa Clara experimented
with a unique concept of combining
a 34-bed licensed residential care home
for frail seniors with a day activity center
for independent elderly.*

Ha Mo Trinh

HA MO TRINH LIVED THROUGH MANY BLEAK DAYS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, which she describes as, “a lot of killing, a lot of suffering...many people dead...bombings...left over me is a permanent headache of memories.”

Mo Trinh's husband was a merchant trader in China and had just returned to Vietnam after being separated from his family for 15 years. Ignoring his wife's warning, he became a fisherman to support his family. “The first two times, he returned with a boat full of fish and seafood. On his third time out, the Vietnamese army captured him and accused him of carrying U.S. Army ammunitions. From that day on, he never came back to us again,” she says sadly.

Mo Trinh became a single parent and sole provider for her children. After the war ended, her older son, who had joined the U.S. army as a translator, was forced to escape the Communist government rule and flee to Malaysia to avoid being killed. This action brought much grief to Mo Trinh in the ensuing years. The communist government badgered her daily about her son's whereabouts. Then one day, a neighbor heard Trinh's son dedicate a song on the radio to his mother. Mo Trinh sold all her belongings and tried to smuggle her way by boat to Malaysia to find him. Her tears of joy were short-lived however, as she was caught and jailed. She was released three months later but her 15-year-old son remained



there for nine months of hardship. Penniless, Mo Trinh hung out in the streets and lived like a beggar. Fortunately, with the assistance of others, she was able to return home to Cholon. In the meantime, her older son was reassigned by the U.S. Army to the United States. Working hard, the family was happily reunited when he was able to sponsor his mother and younger brother's arrival six years later.

Mo Trinh eventually moved to San Francisco. A senior organization provided low-cost meals but eating western food was harmful to her health. Luckily, one of her friends was a volunteer for Self-Help for the Elderly and invited her to try the Chinese style meals served there. Mo Trinh recalls, “I loved it very much and my health started improving with their hot dishes. Not only that, I was happy meeting new friends and exercising daily in the classes.”

Now 70 years old and still independent, Mo Trinh lives in a senior housing site on Ellis Street. In late 1995, she returned to Vietnam for her grandson's wedding. While happy to see family and old friends again, she also faced sad memories of her hard life there. Of her life now, she says, “Although I live alone and depend on social security for my survival, I am happy. I have nothing to worry about anymore but my perennial headache will always remind me of the days of the war. My only wish is there would be no more wars around the world.”





何慕貞

*Self-Help for the Elderly provides
essential bilingual and bicultural programs.
SHE's staff are fluent in Cambodian,
Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog,
Vietnamese and over 10 dialects of Chinese.*

Hu Shi Chung

"ALTHOUGH I EMIGRATED TO AMERICA AT A VERY LATE AGE, 67, I AM PROUD OF BECOMING AN AMERICAN CITIZEN and living in such a free, democratic country with justice and care, especially for the elderly," says Hu Shi Chung, a resident of Self-Help for the Elderly's Lady Shaw Senior Center in San Francisco. Now 78, Shi Chung or Uncle Hu as everyone calls him, is an active senior citizen who says that helping people is what makes him happy.

Fluent in both Mandarin and Cantonese, Uncle Hu is a very necessary part of the programs offered at Lady Shaw. An educated Chinese scholar, he is the one others turn to when they need something written in Chinese for event announcements, schedules, newspaper articles or whatever written notices that need to be posted. He also volunteers with the daily nutrition program and acts as assistant to the Lady Shaw Program Coordinator.

Born in China in 1917, Uncle Hu migrated to Taiwan in the 1950s to escape Communism. His formal education was cut short by the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Interested in navigation, he read and studied many books about the subject, eventually becoming a sailor on the M/V Yee Tak in New York in 1962. He loved the sea and continued working on ships in the Merchant Marines for the next 22 years. By then he had worked himself up the ranks from



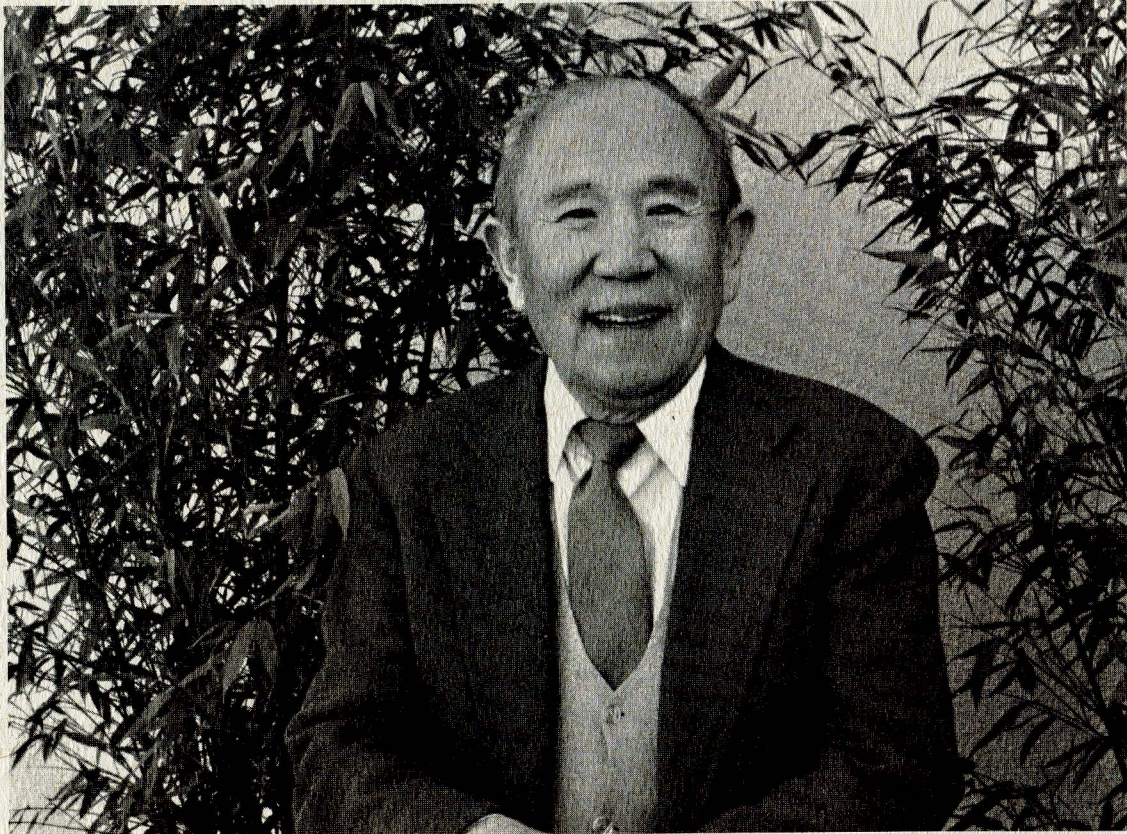
sailor to Junior Chief Officer and by the time he retired, Acting Captain.

In 1984, Uncle Hu came to America, sponsored by his daughter who was a U.S. citizen. Since he once studied with a famous doctor in Taiwan, he worked as an acupressurist in San Francisco. This was a job he especially liked for it allowed him to support his family using a skill he had learned as a youth.

Uncle Hu is a religious man and believes that he has "an abundant life full of blessings from God who gave me the guts to face all challenges. I did not have the chance of going to study at the University but I did achieve my goals through self study. Children today in America are fortunate in that they can concentrate solely on studying, unlike the old days when we had to worry first about sending money back to China to support our parents. I guess I will always be grateful to the U.S. for accepting me into this country and changing my life all around."

Uncle Hu is most grateful for the loving care and service he receives from Self-Help for the Elderly. "We all use the mutual respect system and get along well here. My life is content as my family of one son, three daughters, a grandson and a granddaughter are all well. I am still blessed with good health which I believe comes from having healthy food, good sleep, a good normal way of living and a peaceful heart," he concludes.





*When it opened in 1990,
the Lady Shaw Senior Center introduced
the first new units of subsidized housing
into the Chinatown/North Beach area
in over 10 years.*

Gin Lee

GIN LEE HAS LED AN EXCITING LIFE IN HIS 92 YEARS. As the first Chinese purser of a world class cruise line, he circled the world 12 times and visited two wonders of the world five times each: India's Taj Mahal and Egypt's pyramids.

Born in New York City to a merchant's family that included two sisters and four brothers, Gin spent all of his school years in New York's Chinatown. While working, he attended night school at St. John's College and graduated in 1928. He managed the Chinese department of the Foreign Exchange at National Citibank and after 13 years, moved to jobs in Washington D.C. and San Francisco. It was pure happenstance that led him to his next career.

One day, while aboard the President Cleveland going from San Francisco to Los Angeles, Gin met the ship's purser. Shortly after, Sam Chin, a friend who was then Chinatown Manager of American President Lines, called to break their lunch date because the purser had died suddenly and he was looking for a replacement. Gin jokingly offered to take the position temporarily and was promptly sent to an interview with the Personnel Manager. He ended up staying for over 20 years from 1955 to 1979 and served on all 27 ships of the American President Lines. "My jobs were manyfold as a purser," he explains. "I paid the help, oversaw the freight manifest, socialized with the passengers, ran the entertainment programs,



conducted the official Sunday church services, and led the land excursions."

Gin lived nine months at sea with three months off on land. During one break, he returned to China to bury his father's remains in his hometown. "As I was the first Chinese officer to go around the world on a cruise ship, I guess I helped break the ice for everyone so Chinese could have a chance. Of course there were always Chinese employed in the laundry or kitchens, but I was the first purser and there were still only about half a dozen Chinese officers when I left in 1979."

Living in San Francisco after he retired, Gin made many friends while pursuing his passion for golf and playing at Scotland's finest courses every other year. It wasn't until 1993, when he fell in his apartment and lay there for nine hours until his landlord heard his cries for help, that Gin's family felt he could no longer live by himself. A progressive case of Parkinson's disease hampered his equilibrium, limiting his walking and golf days to memories.

Gin is now one of 28 residents at Self-Help for the Elderly's Sunrise Center in Santa Clara. "Here they treat us with respect for the individual, no matter how frail we are or demanding our needs. To pass the day, I play a bit of mah-jong, watch a bit of television, and enjoy socializing with my fellow residents. We're like one big family. This is my home now and I am happy."





李根有

*Up to 4,000 seniors, Asian and Caucasian,
participate in 27 programs and activities
at the San Mateo Center each month
ranging from Hawaiian dance,
mah-jong or physical fitness, languages,
lectures and festivals.*

Marie Lee

BORN IN 1917 IN THE HEART OF SAN FRANCISCO'S CHINATOWN, 78-year-old Marie Lee is proud to call herself a native daughter of California. A member of what was then a small Chinese community located on a few streets in Chinatown, she attended St. Mary's Grammar School and in 1936, graduated from Galileo High School, which she proudly points out is still there on Van Ness Avenue.

Marie recalls, "In those days, there was a lot of racial prejudice. In school we Chinese would stay in a group by ourselves. All of us were poor, and I brought my own sandwich for lunch and spent 10 cents for a bowl of soup. After school, I worked in a sewing factory six days a week, making around \$3 a day which was a lot of money in those times since most school jobs only paid \$25 per month."

After marrying, Marie was busy as a wife and a mother to five children (three boys and two girls). During this time, she also worked as a waitress at the stock exchange and for the Engineers Club, where she remained for 17 years until retiring at 62.

It is interesting to note that Marie, always a busy and productive lady, considers her work as a volunteer as the most meaningful of her life. "I came back to Chinatown to volunteer with Self-Help for the

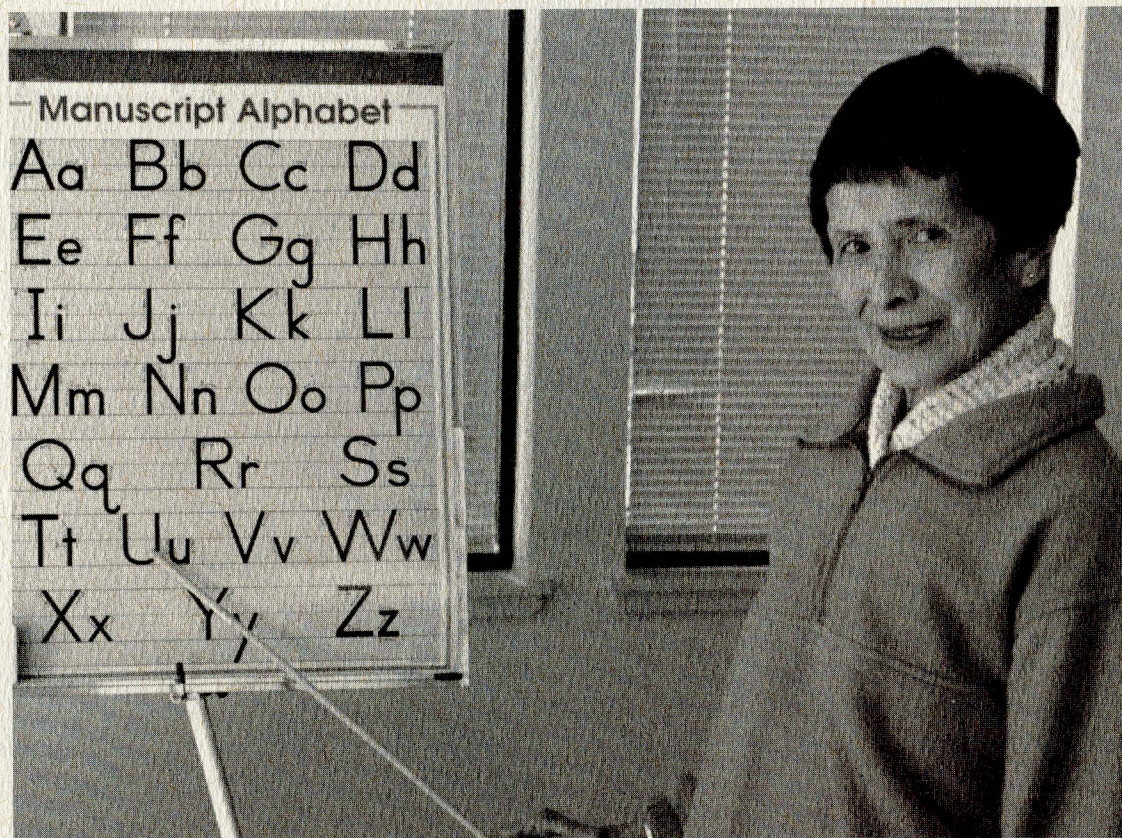


Elderly and have enjoyed every minute of these past 15 years working with Chinese seniors. So many of the new immigrants do not understand or speak English and I try to teach them some conversation."

Marie is an asset and important part of the senior programs at Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE), teaching not only English classes but also arts and crafts, citizenship and knitting. Energetic and full of youthful enthusiasm, she is a role model to many people. Whether she's leading the senior cheer leaders squad at the Golden Gait Walkathon or encouraging participants at fundraising events, her energetic spirit inspires all around her. It is no wonder Marie's eight grandchildren and one great granddaughter are so proud of her. In fact, her daughter Penny is following Mom's footsteps and is now a SHE volunteer herself.

Marie was recently voted "Volunteer of the Year" by the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program. Of that honor, she says, "I hope to continue what I'm doing for a long time for my time here is well spent for a purpose. I think being active makes you a better person and I only wish more people would do volunteer work. Then they could appreciate the satisfaction you gain for yourself when helping others."





李寶珠

*Self-Help HomeCare and Hospice
provides 24,000 visits a year in San Francisco.
Over the past 13 years, the program
has served patients as young as one day old
to those over 100.*

Leung Foon

TINY AND PETITE WITH A CHEERFUL SMILE ON HER FACE, Leung Foon is a healthy 86-year-old with a big heart and a zest for life. She loves the freedom of living in America and says, "I will always be grateful to my nephew who sponsored my entrance to the United States so that I could have an easier life than I had in Hong Kong."

Foon spent the first 53 years of her life in China during a period of warfare and political upheaval under Communist rule. In 1962, she moved to Hong Kong with her son's family while her husband journeyed alone to Peru to seek his fortune. Foon's husband returned to Hong Kong five years later but passed away from a short illness that same year. Meanwhile, unskilled for well-paying work, Foon and her son survived by selling hot won ton noodles to pedestrians on the streets of Hong Kong. The work was very hard and they were often arrested by police as well as harassed by gang members.

Recognizing the hardship of his aunt's existence, Foon's nephew sponsored the whole family to the United States in 1973 and they settled in San Francisco. Even though she was 64 years old at the time, Foon was always willing to work and immediately found a job as a seamstress in a sewing factory. She eventually ended up in a Chinatown restaurant making dim sum, until a hand injury forced her to retire in her early 70s.



The mother of one son, two daughters, nine grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren, Foon lives alone in San Francisco. "Although I cannot see my family as often as I would like," she remarks, "my daughter in New York calls me all the time and I enjoy spending holidays with my son and other daughter."

San Francisco's Chinatown is a happy haven for Foon, although she is concerned that since moving here over 20 years ago, the crime rate has grown and the streets are dirtier. Given the choice, though, Foon prefers living in Chinatown where she never spends a lonely moment. She participates in many activities at Self-Help

for the Elderly (SHE) and is described by friends and associates as a wonderfully pleasant, patient, and uncomplaining senior who enjoys chatting with anyone she meets.

Slowed slightly by a mild condition caused by Parkinson's Disease, Foon continues to live an active and busy life. "Living among fellow Chinese people brings me much pleasure and I have many friends through my coming to Self-Help. I especially like the programs of celebration during festival times and I am so grateful for the Social Services Unit who provide aid by translating my mail since I am non-English speaking and reading. They also help fill out government forms that come to me."





梁寬

*Leonard House is
SHE's first permanent residential
care home for frail seniors.
Activities include dim sum lunches
in restaurants, mah-jong
and field trips.*

Li Yung Hsien

LI YUNG HSIEN MAY BE 91 YEARS OLD, but her mind and body are as sharp as someone 20 years younger. She laughs when she says the best times of her life today are her children, her grandchildren and playing mah-jong with her friends—although she sheepishly admits “my eyes aren’t as good as they used to be and I miss many moves I wouldn’t have before.”

As a resident of Self-Help for the Elderly’s Sunrise Residential Care Home in Santa Clara, Yung Hsien enjoys an active life that includes the good company of her fellow seniors. Weekends are busy with her seven daughters who live in China, Michigan, Maryland, San Mateo and San Francisco. Her late son’s family also visits from San Francisco. She is proud of having over 40 grandchildren—the exact number she isn’t sure of, but all are described as being bright lights in her life.

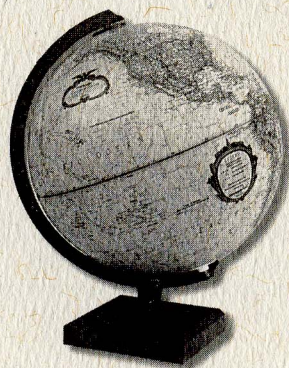
Born in 1904, at a time when most Chinese women were kept at home, Yung Hsien was lucky to have a liberal father who allowed her to be educated, first by a private tutor, then at a girls’ middle school in Changsha. She even attended a teacher’s institute in China, majoring in education. However, at 17, Yung Hsien married her husband who was only 16. Her favorite memories are all connected with their happy marriage, which lasted almost 70 years until her husband’s death in 1990.



“My husband was with the diplomatic service and in the early 1930s, he was stationed in London, England for four years. Returning to China in 1936, we raised our family there until he became the Chinese Ambassador to Iran from 1943-46. Next he served in Bangkok as Ambassador to Thailand from 1946-48,” Yung Hsien recalls. “This was right after World War II when China was considered one of the five great powers of the world.” In 1949 during the Communist takeover of China, Yung Hsien moved to Taiwan to take care of their children.

In 1953, Mr. Yung received a job offer from the U.S. Secretary of State and the family left Taiwan. They immediately enjoyed being part of America and soon filed for naturalization. Of her early days in America, Yung Hsien has only one bitter memory—she felt there was some discrimination against the Chinese, who were not welcomed in every neighborhood.

Nevertheless, Yung Hsien feels her life has had many blessings. She is proud to be part of Self-Help for the Elderly’s 30th anniversary celebration. And though she has traveled the world meeting many heads of states, Yung Hsien feels most fortunate for her life in America where “I enjoy the freedom to be who I am and to vote for what I believe in. This is a privilege we must all take seriously, for in many of the lands I lived in or visited before, this was not so for their citizens.”





李容先

*Seniors in their 90s don't take
a backseat to anyone. They are active
participants in Hawaiian dance classes,
the Senior Sports Day, and compete
for the Lady of Benevolence title
at the annual Longevity Ball.*

Liang Shu Fen

BEFORE LIANG SHU FEN AND HIS WIFE LEFT CHINA IN 1993, life was simple in the rural areas of Yan Ping. Light industry and economic activity were beginning a boom under the liberal policies of the central government. Shu Fen was a scholar of Chinese literature and even though he had been the subject of persecution and political oppression like millions of other intellectuals during the Communist rule, he lived peacefully as a retired teacher on a government pension.

So why did the Liangs leave this existence for another of struggle and adjustment problems? Shu Fen responds, "What else but the American dream! I always heard a lot of people talking about the happy life in America enjoying freedom, liberty, human rights and prosperity. Also, I knew it provided ample opportunity for study, work and enterprise, so I hoped that if I became a legal immigrant, my two unmarried sons would have a better chance of immigrating to the U.S. too."

Realizing the American dream, however, was not an easy one for the Liangs. They used up their savings to purchase air tickets to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and although both were elderly, their daughter did not earn enough to support her parents. Miserable and sick from the cold weather, they decided to join other relatives in sunny California.

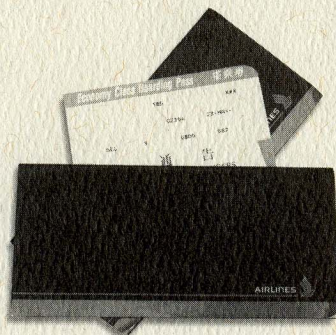
The Liangs tried very hard to find employment, but due to their inability to speak English, were unable to find even the most humble

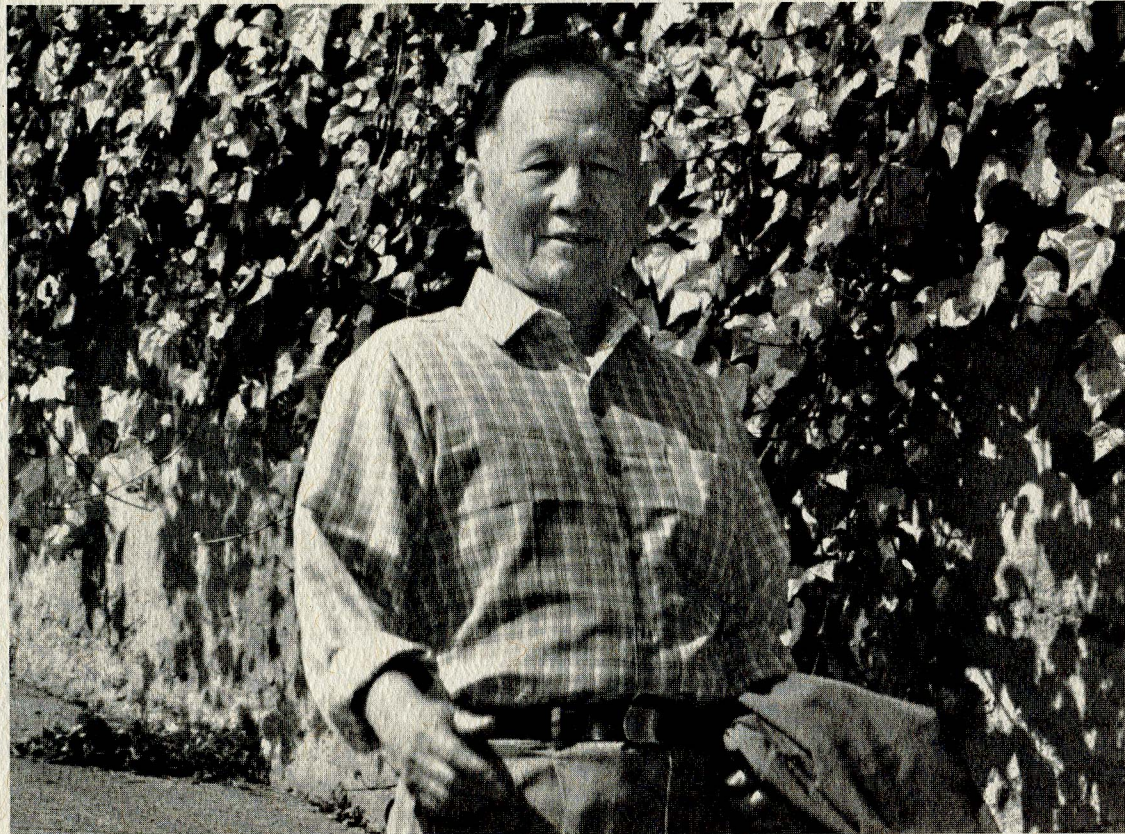


and low-paying jobs. Shu Fen recalls those first few months of misery when he almost decided to return to China in desperation. "Fortunately, a friend led me to Self-Help for the Elderly where they enrolled me in the housekeeping training class and I have been one of their housekeepers ever since then. I am proud to be working actively as a part-time housekeeper for 24 hours weekly despite my old age."

Living now in San Francisco's Chinatown, Shu Fen and his wife are happy in America, enjoying reading, television and learning English at home. Their modest income rarely allows them to eat out so Self-Help for the Elderly activities are their main source of recreation. Their one regret is that they are separated from their daughter on the East Coast, and their sons, who remain in China.

Although Shu Fen's immigration to America came late in life and he is still working past the usual retirement age due to necessity, he believes his peace of mind is the essence of his longevity and good health. "For good health, we all know one needs to get adequate exercise. Well, in my case, my job of housekeeping makes me perform physical work which actually cured the arthritic shoulder joints I suffered with before I started working. So I guess you might say, I can thank Self-Help for not only helping me find employment, but also for my good health."





梁述芬

*The annual Self-Help for the Elderly
Thanksgiving Day Feast provides meals
to 1,700 seniors and children from
the community. The feast requires
70 turkeys, 364 pounds of vegetables
and 400 pounds of rice.*

Kathy Liu

ALTHOUGH KATHY LIU WAS HAPPY WORKING IN HER CHOSEN PROFESSION AS A DENTIST IN CHINA, she left seeking a better future and education for her daughter in America. Today, Kathy's dream is about to be fulfilled as her daughter prepares to complete her college studies in Sacramento, California.

In China where there is no private medical practice, Kathy worked as a dentist in Beijing after graduating from college. Through a lucky twist of fate, she was reassigned to a hospital in Guangdong, escaping much of the turmoil in the North during the Cultural Revolution and eventually leaving for a better life.

Kathy's journey to America was not as difficult as it was for other immigrants from China since her father was an American-born Chinese. As the daughter of an American citizen, she was granted automatic citizenship.

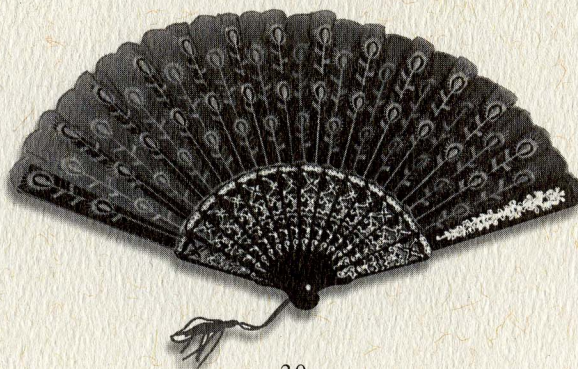
However, unable to practice dentistry in America, Kathy's first job was selling souvenirs in a Chinatown gift shop. This was frustrating to a highly educated individual, but Kathy says, "I accepted the fact that it would be difficult for me to find the same kind of position I had in China. Because of my age, I would not be allowed to go back to medical school and earn a degree. My job as a sales clerk had long hours, no health benefits and low pay."



A tip from a friend led Kathy to Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) in 1988. SHE was looking for a bilingual person to work in their Community & Home Injury Prevention Project for Seniors (CHIPPS). Kathy was hired and stayed until her retirement in 1992. Although the position was only part-time and paid less than that of a salesclerk, Kathy enjoyed her job as the only Chinese-speaking member of the CHIPPS staff. She was able to receive important health benefits, help other seniors and make many friends. Kathy is proud of her involvement with CHIPPS, where she translated four pamphlets that were published in

Chinese and distributed to seniors. She also completed a survey of Chinatown needs which led to the repair and upgrade of many senior housing units in San Francisco.

Kathy is a life-long learner and after retiring, enrolled at City College of San Francisco to continue her studies. Because she learned so much working in the community, Kathy also returned to volunteer once a week at SHE. She says with a smile, "The only way I can give back what I learned was to return here to help the other seniors. My life of volunteering here and going back to school is very rewarding as it is a wonderful feeling being able to go to school at my age and learn whatever I want to learn."





廖劉敏如

*SHE is blessed with more than
1,000 volunteers. A core group of 200
commit themselves to overseeing policy
and direction, major fundraising,
classroom instruction and
program implementation.*

Lu Qi Yan

WHEN LU QI YAN ARRIVED IN NEW YORK IN 1988, she looked forward to a short stay with her oldest son, a researcher at Columbia University. But she liked America so much that soon after, her son filed a petition to change the status of her tourist visa to permanent residency. Qi Yan's decision to remain in America still surprises her today for she had absolutely no intention of leaving her home, nor her many friends and relatives in Shanghai, China.

Qi Yan recalls her "golden childhood" in China. Although her mother died when she was only five years old, it was an aunt who greatly influenced Qi Yan's upbringing, not only giving her love but an opportunity to explore knowledge and western culture. She was sent to English schools and given piano lessons, a gift she has enjoyed throughout her life. As the owner of two factories, her father provided a privileged and comfortable life for his family and encouraged his daughter to finish college. She liked music much more but followed her father's wishes and majored in economics.

In 1992 while visiting a friend in San Francisco, Qi Yan became enamored with the weather and the convenience of transportation. She decided to move west, finding affordable senior housing through Self-Help for the Elderly. She was also able to pursue her love of



music, teaching piano to a few students through a music college. "I was very happy to do that as I had been a piano instructor in Shanghai and this is the thing that I enjoy doing the most."

Qi Yan is proud of her children and grandson who live in many parts of the world: the oldest son in New Jersey, her daughter in Hong Kong and her youngest son in Australia. Her oldest son and her daughter also enjoy playing the piano, but unlike her mother, Qi Yan's daughter likes performing before large audiences.

Although she now lives alone, Qi Yan never feels lonely as she has many hobbies. She is currently learning French, which to her is "a beautiful language." She still plays the piano for four or five hours daily and never feels bored. A devout Christian, she enjoys being with her friends and family especially during Christmas, a holiday she observed even in China.

Always a positive thinker, Qi Yan has no regrets and at 73, only wishes she could have more time ahead. "I guess I would say I believe in taking things easy and not being too serious all the time. I am thankful for the aunt who gave me the opportunity to learn different things in life, and now I am grateful to the United States government because I think I am most fortunate to live in a country with such wonderful support organizations for seniors."





*The Senior Employment and Training Unit
has trained and placed almost 3,000
home health aides and housekeepers
in the community.*

Lum Shee

AT THE AGE OF 97, LUM SHEE FINDS HIMSELF LIVING ALONE, wheelchair-bound and with no family. Friends either have passed away or are homebound like himself. His only contact with the outside world are the Self-Help for the Elderly Home Care helpers who have been caring for him for the past nine years. Shee considers them to be his closest and most dependable friends.

Shee has had good times mixed with hard times in his long life. He recalls working with soaked feet in the fields of China from morning until late evening with no such thing as a day off. At his mother's suggestion, he left China at 24 to follow his father's footsteps to America. Sneaking aboard a ship and pretending to be a member of the staff, he made his way to San Francisco and joined his father.

Speaking not a word of English, Shee had difficulty finding work other than a series of low-paying unskilled jobs. Delivering flowers to Americans during the day, he picked up a little English but wasn't streetwise enough to avoid being fooled by strangers. A white man once promised him a job if he had \$5 to purchase a suit and dress up for the interview. The man took Shee by cable car to the downtown Emporium, offering to help purchase the suit for him since Chinese were not welcomed in the store. The man took off with Shee's money never to be seen again, while Shee stood outside the door for hours, waiting for his new suit.

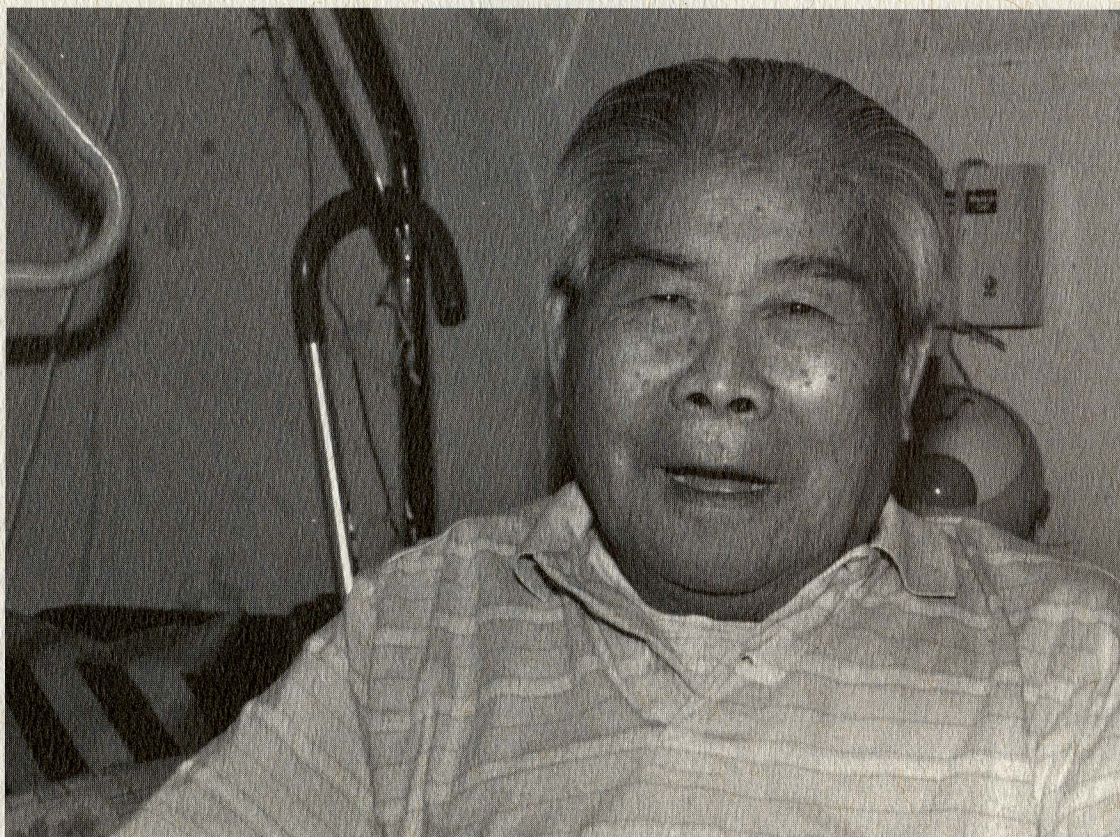


A turning point for Shee came when a social worker took him to the Commodore Stockton School in Chinatown for English lessons. Shee found work as a dishwasher at the Seal Rock Club House. Rewarded for his diligence, he was eventually promoted to head of the dishwashing department. "I could have worked there until retirement if it weren't for World War II," he says. "I was 45 years old but couldn't be placed in the military, for by then my knees were wearing out so I flunked the physical exam. I was placed in a Military Hospital for treatment in Monterey and when my arthritis was resolved, I was assigned to cook for 500 to 600 soldiers

which I enjoyed."

Although his health started to decline 10 years ago, Shee has always been an independent person and insists on caring and cooking for himself even from his wheelchair. He is happy to be in America and says, "If I lived in China, I would have had to share my earnings with the government without return and would not have the freedom of doing and saying whatever I want to. Here in America we have a choice of working hard or not, and yet make a decent living. My only regret is that I couldn't save enough money for a return visit to my homeland of China when I was younger and in good health. Now I have the money but my poor health and old age do not allow me to."





林時添

*The Nutrition Department
serves over 200,000 meals, including
36,000 meals to homebound seniors,
through 11 senior centers in
San Francisco, San Mateo and
Santa Clara counties.*

Mi Yu Tian

ALTHOUGH MI YU TIAN HAS LIVED IN AMERICA FOR OVER 40 YEARS AND SPEAKS NO ENGLISH, he does not feel his adjustment to this country has been difficult.

Born in northern China in 1920, Yu Tian married and later sired a son there. A sailor since he was 17, he jumped ship in 1952 in fear of the Korean war and arrived in America. Yu Tian worked as a chef in Chinese restaurants in New York and Washington D.C. for over 20 years. At the age of 53, he married for a second time and sired a second son; however, the marriage soon ended in divorce. With determination and help from a lawyer, Yu Tian applied for legal status and was naturalized in 1975.

Seeking translation help with forms and letters, Yu Tian first came to Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) in 1979. His needs became apparent in 1982 when he was hospitalized with bruises covering his body. A victim of abuse by a relative, Yu Tian had been locked in a room and beaten because he refused to surrender his Social Security check. Although this was not his first beating, this was the first time that Yu Tian could not bear the physical torture and was forced to call the police. Still, he blamed himself for this predicament, continually berating himself for being caught in a bad situation.

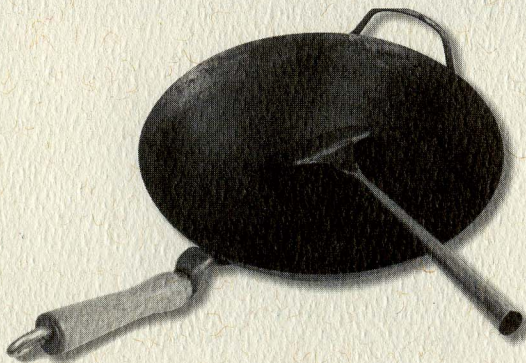


Although Chinese people do not readily share family affairs in a public manner, Yu Tian seemed to recognize the value of participating in the elder abuse prevention program initiated by SHE. When asked, he began to talk about his plight. It has been difficult and painful at times to talk about his experience but Yu Tian has shared his story with other seniors and the media to raise public awareness about elder victims of domestic violence. He appeared in "Family Secret," a KQED public television story, and was featured in a nationally televised video news report on the physical and financial abuse of seniors, sponsored by the American Association

of Retired Persons (AARP).

Today, finding it difficult to walk, Yu Tian mostly stays home watching television or reading Chinese classical and historical novels to pass the time.

He continues to speak out against domestic violence. When SHE received a Catholic Healthcare West grant to enhance its elder abuse programs, Yu Tian made a presentation. When asked why he has been so open and cooperative in sharing his story, he replies simply that others were there for him in his time of need. "Self-Help has been my saving grace."





米玉田

*Self-Help for the Elderly
is part of the San Francisco Consortium
of Elder Abuse Prevention and works
in collaboration with other agencies
to provide awareness,
counseling and education.*

Linda Meng Shea

UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF LINDA MENG SHEA, the slow fluid movements of Tai Chi Chuan are practiced weekly by many eager seniors at Self-Help for the Elderly's San Mateo Center. An active, vibrant 73-year old, Linda has shared her knowledge of Tai Chi for the past 10 years and currently teaches two sessions weekly to help fellow seniors maintain physical stamina and balance in their lives.

Linda has always been interested in the arts and has shared her skills in Chinese cooking, brush painting, tai chi and flower arranging for the past two decades. Teaching is her greatest love—she currently teaches brush painting at the Senior Center and provides private lessons in her home. For her own self development, she attends classes in line dancing and Spanish at the San Mateo Center.

Born in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, China in 1923, Linda was the oldest of four sisters and one brother. She spent her high school years in Shanghai and Japan, returning to Nanjing to study medicine at Central University. Unable to continue her studies due to lack of financial support, Linda and her husband moved to Japan with their four children in 1949. Her most memorable time in Japan was studying Chinese brush painting under Pu Ru (cousin of the last

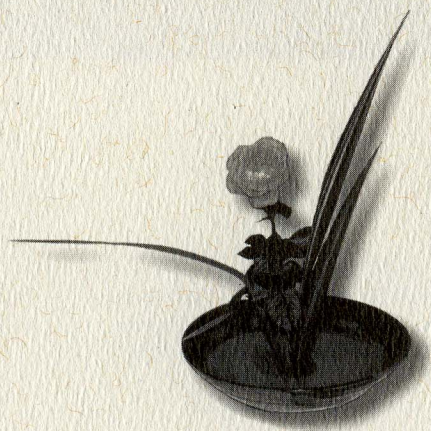


Ching Dynasty emperor Pu Yi), learning Ikebana flower arranging, and learning cooking under Chinese chefs.

Life in Japan was difficult, however, as employment was hard to obtain. Following her divorce, Linda came to the United States. In order to secure permanent residency status, she found employment with a Japanese florist, thereby using her skills as a fluent Japanese speaker and trained ikebana arranger. After marrying her husband, Ed Shea, she returned to her love of learning at Northern Virginia Community College and studied brush painting with private tutors.

Today Linda is the proud grandmother of five grandchildren and two great grandchildren, who live in the United States, Brazil and Malaysia. Family reunions once or twice a year are high points of her life, and she loves cooking and painting for her family.

Always proud of the rich cultural history and heritage of China and her people, Linda believes that Tai Chi Chuan and brush painting give her peace of mind and body. When asked to describe her philosophy of life, her overcoming of obstacles to enhance self-confidence is evident in her response: "From bitter struggles emerges sweetness of success."





謝孟錫華

*The Gold & Silver Travel Club
is a popular program developed for
Self-Help's fun-loving seniors
who have traveled to more than
10 countries and 5 continents.*

Bruce Shem

THE PRIZE FOR THE VOLUNTEER WHO HAS SERVED SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY (SHE) FOR THE LONG-EST TIME goes to 88-year-old Bruce Shem. Bruce has served meals at SHE's senior centers for over 20 years. After retiring, he and his wife Margaret began coming to SHE's Maniltown Senior Center on Commercial Street. Later when the Jean Parker School site opened, Bruce and Margaret volunteered there and continued until seven years ago when he had by-pass surgery for heart problems.

Now widowed, Bruce has difficulties getting up the hills of San Francisco, but never fails to catch a daily street car to the Lady Shaw Senior Center, his home away from home. "After helping there for 20 years, going to Lady Shaw Center has become part of my life routine," he explains. "Although I am American-born and English-speaking, since most of my friends at our lunch tables speak only Chinese, I have had to learn to speak the language so I can communicate with them. At least, it forced me to learn more Chinese in my old age!"

The youngest of six children in a poor farming family, Bruce moved as a teenager to Los Angeles with his mother. Times were financially hard, so after attending two years of high school, he dropped out to support his family. Chinese people at that time could only work in restaurants, laundries or as domestic help, so Bruce found a waiter's job in a Chinese restaurant that paid \$90 a month.

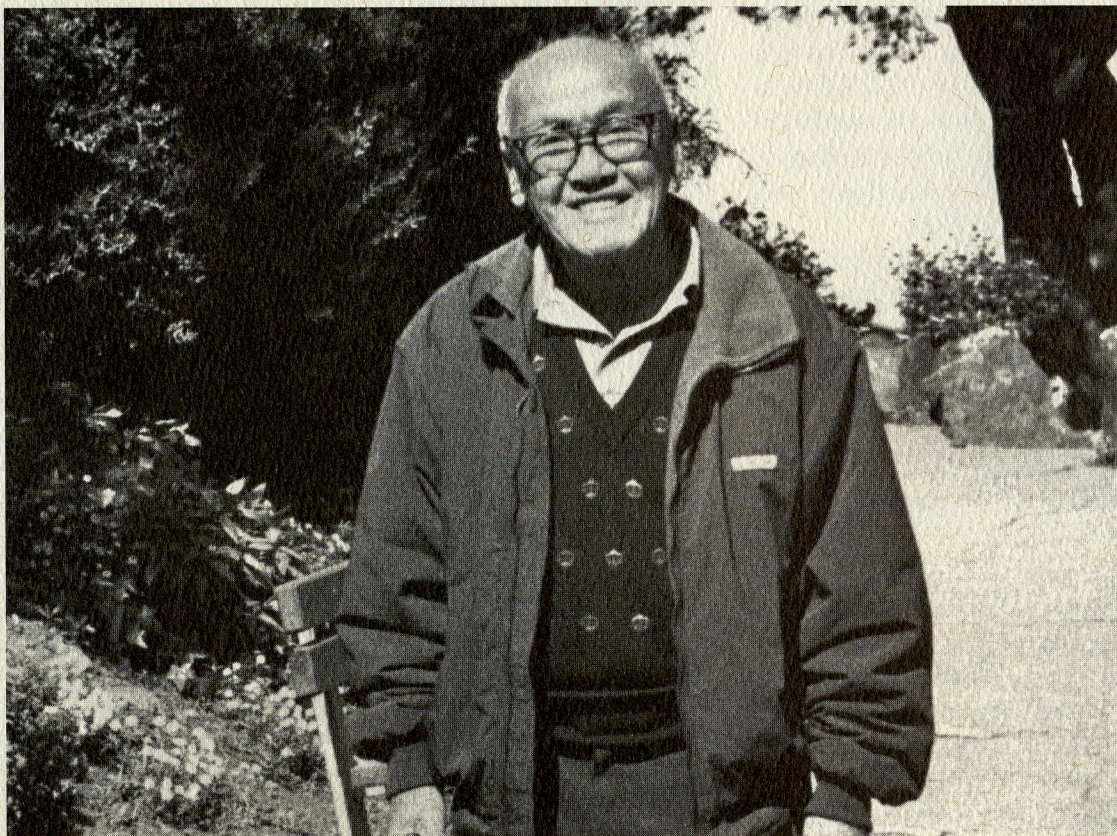


Bruce has vivid memories of meeting his wife for the first time. On a sightseeing trip to San Francisco, it was love at first sight when friends introduced him to Margaret. Six days later, they were married. Bruce moved to San Francisco and got a job as a waiter in a private transportation club for men while Margaret worked as a telephone operator with the Chinatown Exchange. Bruce happily recalls that "Although we only knew each other for six days when we committed ourselves to each other, it turned out to be a wonderful and happy marriage. We both loved to travel and drove across America many times visiting national parks and museums all over the country."

Now Bruce lives alone in the same house at the edge of Chinatown that he and his wife bought over 50 years ago. Surrounded by friends at SHE and his loving family, Bruce says he still enjoys life. Too old to cook, his daily nutrients come from the lunches served at the Center, dinners at nearby restaurants or pre-cooked meals brought by his daughter Claudia.

Bruce is still an adventurous soul and loves to travel. He occasionally flies to Hawaii to visit friends and family and often takes excursion trips on public transportation to visit his sons, William and Clovis, to window shop or just to grab a cup of coffee at a nearby shopping mall. Few people have as much energy and zest for life as SHE's longest volunteer, Bruce Shem.





*The Nutrition Department
holds an annual Spring Banquet
honoring "Super Seniors,"
90 years and older. The oldest
participant is 102 years old.*

Henry Hsiao H. Sheng

HENRY SHENG HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS at Self-Help for the Elderly's San Mateo Center since it opened in 1993. He is an energetic, enthusiastic 91-year old who has enrolled in nearly every class the center has offered, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Hawaiian dance, ballroom dancing, singing and Peking Opera.

Always an eager participant in the lunch programs or special event parties, Henry says "The Center is like a family to me where I feel very much at home with a lot of activities to be in... It's amazing, I used to think 50 was old. I am amazed to have lived to age 90 and still be going strong!"

Henry's best times are visiting with his family and friends. He has four sons, one stepson, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, most of whom reside in the United States and in the Bay Area. In 1995, the San Mateo Center helped Henry organize a 90th birthday party attended by more than 130 guests and family, along with an overflow crowd of his friends from the Center.

Born in Shanghai, China, Henry grew up in a traditional Chinese family where his marriage was arranged at age 17. After graduating from St. John's University in Shanghai, the premier Christian university of the area, Henry opened a successful business importing metals such as steel and zinc sheets. From 1926 to 1949, the period before the Communist takeover of China, he was active as a



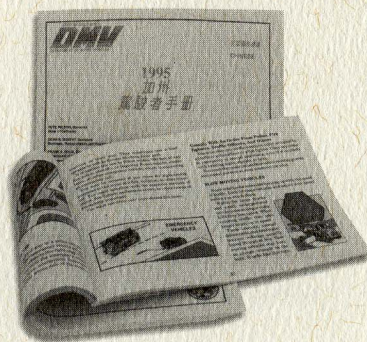
trader on the Gold and Cotton Exchange. Following the death of his first wife, he moved to Hong Kong in the early 1950s and entered the ship brokerage business.

At age 64, Henry and his second wife moved to New York City hoping to live in retirement. Unfortunately, a sudden devaluation of their investment portfolio forced Henry's return to the work force. He worked full time as a manager of a shipping brokerage firm for six years and continued to work as an accountant for a customs brokerage company until 1985, where at age 80, he officially retired after working 15 years in the American workforce as a senior citizen. After 47

happy years of marriage, Henry's second wife died and he moved to Foster City, California to be near one of his sons. By choice, he still lives independently by himself but his son is always close by.

Henry feels he has had a good life and can only credit moderation and balance in diet as well as physical exercise for his longevity. "Being involved in outside activities is important to keep up one's zest for life," he maintains, "and my favorite hobby is singing Chinese Opera with the San Mateo seniors."

Henry is proud that his youngest son just received a Ph.D. in Physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), but he smiles broadly when he shares his own latest achievement. He just passed his driver's renewal test with flying colors and his current license is good until 1999!





盛效賢

*With unique dexterity, talented
Self-Help for the Elderly seniors
make beautiful mythological birds and
lanterns out of multicolored ribbons.*

Shu Yee

BEFORE COMING TO AMERICA IN 1986, Shu Yee had already made an impact as a community leader in Hong Kong. In the early 1970s, she established a church-sponsored school that still services over 1,000 students a year in the Lam Tim area of Hong Kong. Children living in that low-income area had few educational facilities and faced extreme poverty. With tremendous commitment and energy, Yee was able to realize her vision and improve the lives of those children.

Born and educated in China, Yee recalls that her first teacher was her own father. She finished high school and attended a Hong Kong college for teachers. Yee was an elementary school principal for 13 years before retiring. Wishing to join her children and grandchildren, who had immigrated to the United States and Canada, she decided to move to America. An active working professional all of her life, Yee sought employment in America immediately after arriving here with her husband. She went to work for a printing company at a job she loved.

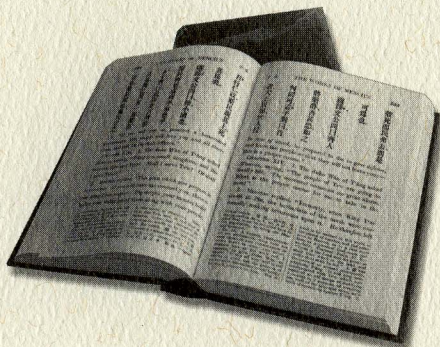
Now a senior citizen, Yee spends her days going to church and volunteering at Self-Help for the Elderly. She enriches the lives of her fellow seniors by teaching classes in Chinese literature and poetry. At the Lady Shaw Center, she is one of the most active participants, lead-



ing the singing and helping out at the special events. Yee says, "At Self-Help centers, I meet people of my age and we have good times talking about our pasts and our children. Since my husband passed away two years ago, Self-Help friends are my extended family that I've grown attached to."

When asked to think about her experience teaching Chinese children in Hong Kong and to compare Chinese parents to American parents, Yee notes, "I find the Chinese parents are very protective and always tell their children what to do. American parents want their children to be independent and learn to take care of themselves, it seems. In general, the younger children in America have an easier time nowadays than those I worked with in Hong Kong because the economy is better here and parents have an easier time providing for their needs."

Yee is proud of and visits all of her six children and 15 grandchildren, who live in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Canada. As she starts her 10th year in America, she has one desire she hopes to fulfill soon. Yee has taken the examination for U.S. citizenship four times but is not giving up. With her strong spirit and determination, she is bound to be successful in the near future.





蘇怡

*The oldest participant
of the Senior Sports Day
is 94 years old.*

Tam Wan Chin

BORN IN 1911, A TIME WHEN BEING A “WOMAN WITHOUT TALENT OR EDUCATION” was considered a virtue, Tam Wan Chin was fortunate to be able to pursue an education with her family’s encouragement. She was allowed to attend the Taishan Women Education College and graduated at the age of 18, although her parents arranged a marriage for her during her senior year.

Wan Chin’s husband, a Chinese American, spent only a short time with his new wife before returning to the United States. Like other Chinese wives at the time, Wan Chin was not allowed to accompany her husband to America so she continued her studies at Shanghai South East Physical Education College. She later taught dancing and physical education at Sheng-Kan University, Ming-San High School in Guangzhou and at a school in her hometown of Taishan.

During the outbreak of World War II and the seizure of Guangzhou by the Japanese, Wan Chin received distressing news that her husband had remarried. Filled with despair, she ventured alone in 1940 to Malaysia where she began a teaching position. By 1942, however, the Japanese army had also seized Malaysia. Disturbed by the turmoil and brutality of the war, Wan Chin remarried for protection and in hope of finally having a happy family life. Unfortunately, her second husband died shortly after the birth of their son and Wan Chin once again had to face the challenges of life and work, this time as a young widow and mother.



A survivor, Wan Chin devoted the next 34 years of her life to education, founding the Sze-Mun Primary School in Sabah, Malaysia. Her commitment, devotion and kindness won respect from students and families, and she was honored as a “Model Teacher” by the Sabah government. After retiring, Wan Chin immigrated to America in 1974. Her dedication as a parent has been rewarded by her son, now a computer and chemical engineer working in San Jose and happily married with three children.

For the past 20 years, Wan Chin has continued a lifelong commitment to the betterment of the community, receiving many awards for her outstanding and selfless service from the Council of Churches and the Mayor of San Francisco. Well liked by others at Self-Help for the Elderly for her cheerfulness, optimism and caring, her secret to good health may be in her daily routine: going to sleep and rising early, exercising daily, and meditating in the morning with positive thinking.

At age 85, Wan Chin still volunteers her talents for many Chinatown nonprofit organizations. She performs Tai Chi Chuan and ribbon, sword and drum dances for lonely seniors at convalescent homes. But one hobby gives Wan Chin special pleasure—making exquisite silk flowers for friends and those in need of cheering. Wan Chin says that in every flower there is a smile and she wants to bring that smile to everyone around her.





譚婉珍

*Every summer, over 500 seniors
from Self-Help for the Elderly
participate in the Senior Sports Day,
competing in eight different events.*

Tam Yee Bao Chi

WHEN PEOPLE SEARCH FOR A WORD TO DESCRIBE ENERGETIC, 94-YEAR-OLD TAM YEE BAO CHI, the word “evergreen” often comes to mind. Her love for life and acceptance of whatever life has bestowed upon her seem to give her a sense of serenity and perseverance. “I am fully contented and have no regrets. I am blessed with many friends and a religious life without which I do not think I could live such an abundant life,” says Bao Chi.

Bao Chi enthusiastically participates in many activities at Self-Help’s Lady Shaw Center. She sings in the choir once a week and is always the first eager student to arrive at her daily English class. She is also the most senior participant in the annual Golden Gait Walkathon.

But life hasn’t always been as rewarding as it is today for Bao Chi. When she was 18, her marriage was arranged to a 20-year-old man who had emigrated to the United States five years earlier and had returned to China. Because of restrictions in travel between the United States and China, Mr. Tam could only stay with Bao Chi for one year until their first son was born. He returned to China for the last time in 1923 and their daughter was born as a result.

The couple did not see each other again until 1968, after being separated for over 40 years. Although Mr. Tam tried many times to bring Bao Chi to America, she admits it was her decision to remain in



Hong Kong where she had emigrated at age 50 with her mother-in-law. Explaining her choice, she says, “I needed to stay behind to take care of my husband’s mother and fulfill my obligations to her until she died in 1968. Only then did I feel the freedom to come to America, even though my children had left me over 20 years earlier to come to America for their education.”

Sadly, only a few months after her arrival, their reunion was cut short by Mr. Tam’s untimely death. Still, Bao Chi feels no bitterness about a lonely life without her husband and children. “My husband was a good man who always sent money home to support me and his children. He worked hard to apply for my entry to America, and I am only sorry that our time together here was so short.”

Today, Bao Chi’s son, a retired architect, visits her monthly and she often sees her three grandchildren who live in San Francisco. She feels blessed with her Self-Help for the Elderly family and fortunate to live in quality housing. “I am lucky to live in this center as I realize that many other elderly are also badly in need of housing but the supply cannot meet the demand. That is why, in my small way, I want to do my utmost best to help Self-Help so we can all help other elderly.”

The key to Bao Chi’s longevity is no doubt her admirable attitude of caring for others and being at peace with herself.





譚余寶珠

*The Lady Shaw Senior Center
was built on top of the Broadway Tunnel
using air-rights granted by
the city of San Francisco.*

Maria Tan

WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE MANILATOWN SENIOR CENTER, Maria Tan's name invariably comes up for this 73-year-old volunteer has been the stabilizing force behind the success of the center for many years, even through its many moves.

Maria vividly remembers one rainy day walking down Pine Street and seeing what she thought was a restaurant. She asked for a cup of coffee as she only had 30 cents in her pocket. A lady explained that this was no restaurant — it was the Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) Manilatown Senior Center, a place for seniors to eat. Maria was invited to join the other seniors. She remembers that day as one of her happiest, a day that changed her whole life.

From that moment on, Marie has volunteered at the Manilatown center every morning and early afternoon. In the late afternoon, she helps out at the Geen Mun Center, another SHE site. Since Maria's four children and six grandchildren all live on the east coast, SHE has become her extended family. She counts her closest friendships as those she has made there with clients and staff.

Maria has come a long way since her birth in Manila, Philippines in 1922. Her father, Vicente King, came from Fujian China during the Spanish occupation and lived in Manila for a brief time before he returned to China to find a wife. He and Maria's mother had six children. Maria remembers happy days growing up in a large



family. "Life was very different in the Philippines. We all lived with our parents and I worked at many different jobs in those days. I attended Far Eastern University studying liberal arts, humanities and political science."

In 1978, Maria's daughter Lourdes petitioned for her mother's entry into the United States. She originally went to live with Lourdes in New Jersey but eventually moved to San Francisco to live with her other daughter, Caroline.

Since retiring from a successful 20-year career for a state manufacturer, Maria has earned several honors for her volunteerism. And although she has been away from school for many years, she strongly values the education learned from life's experiences. "I raised my four children all by myself and know that experience is the real education. For example, my volunteering at Self-Help is part of my education. I am learning every day, whether it be to love, to have compassion or to serve and help others. What is real is in the heart. Although I have been fortunate enough to receive some honors, I do believe that there is no such thing as honor for yourself if you are not working for humanity. I am so lucky to have the opportunity to work for my fellow human beings through my involvement with Self-Help."

Maria's proudest moment came last summer when she brought her granddaughter to volunteer at SHE alongside grandma.





龍共新新

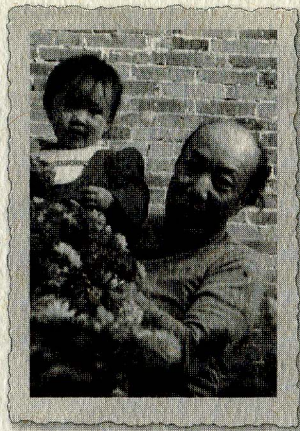
*The most popular entree
in the Meals Program
is short ribs.*

Asia Wong

ASIA WONG HAS ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED BY THE MOVEMENTS OF THE SHRIMP. “To me, the shrimp’s movement is much like our lives. To keep our lives smooth, we have to release ourselves physically and mentally, much as the shrimp stretches out its body. Whereas to face difficulties, we have to tighten up ourselves and remain quiet just like a shrimp deflects its body.”

Seventy-four-year-old Asia has likewise faced his own difficulties calmly and without complaint. Born in China, he was raised as a small boy by his well-educated mother when his father and grandfather left for America in search of gold. Showing a talent for calligraphy, he had to quit his schooling when the Sino-Japanese War began. Asia lived through the turmoil of different political movements, many times expelled to suburban farms to work days and nights in the fields. During the Cultural Revolution, he was forbidden to read or write. Lacking paper or pens, he remained full of enthusiasm for the calligraphy skills he loved but could not practice.

One day, Asia idly moved his finger on the ground with some water and was shocked to see the picture he created. Excited by this new found technique of blending calligraphy and brush painting with his fingers, he practiced it secretly at night. “My fingers became my brush,” he recalls. Following the Revolution, Asia returned to the city



and began to show his finger paintings to others. He also began writing and carving tiny words and paintings on chopsticks and eggs. When government officials heard about his talent, he was invited to demonstrate his skills in public.

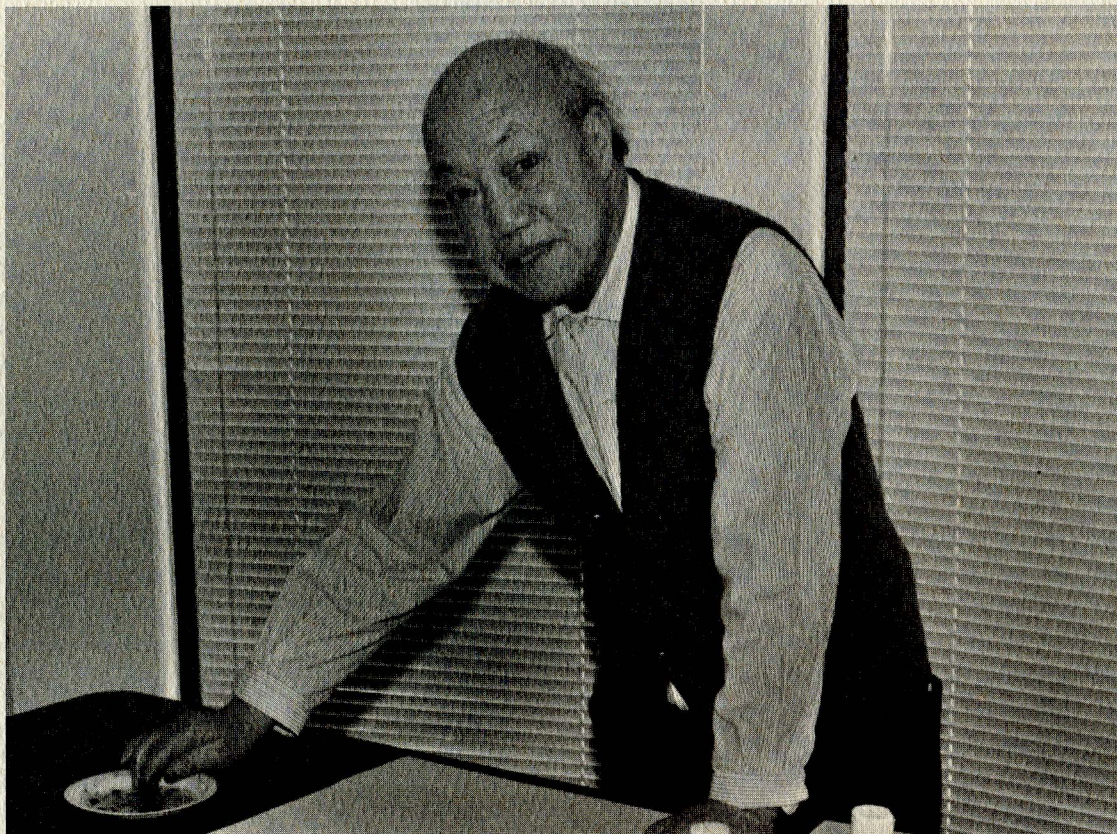
Asia immigrated to the United States in 1986 when he was reunited with his daughter. His son joined the family later and Asia was very happy with his freedom and family in America.

Feeling content with life and wanting to contribute to the community, Asia went to Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) and offered to conduct exercise classes for the seniors. Some eight years later, he is still leading the classes every Thursday and Saturday mornings at Lady Shaw and On Low Wui Senior Centers.

But Asia’s finger painting talent remained hidden until the day he presented one of his paintings as a gift to the SHE staff. With the staff’s encouragement, he shared his talent with the seniors and has since won wide public appreciation for his beautiful works of art. Many of Asia’s finger paintings are now displayed at national and international arts festivals.

A very humble man, Asia has a great sense of belonging to SHE. He shows his gratitude for the staff’s caring and recognition of his talent by volunteering to help others and by donating many of his paintings to SHE’s fundraising events.





*The Emergency In-Home Supportive
Services (IHSS) program provides
6,200 units of services a year to
homebound seniors requiring emergency
personal care and domestic chore services.*

William “Bill” Wong

BILL WONG CONSIDERS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TIMES OF HIS LIFE to be his years in the armed services during two wars and his years as a retiree volunteering to help others. Seventy-three years old and feeling the effects of wartime injuries, he nevertheless has a positive attitude and enjoys helping others less fortunate than himself.

Born an American citizen when the ship bringing his parents docked in Hawaii, Bill grew up in San Francisco’s Chinatown. After his parents separated, he was sent away to live at the Chung Mei Home in El Cerrito, a home for boys whose parents could not care for them. At eight, he was one of the youngest of 40 Chinese American boys living in the Home, but he remembers happy times there with a large extended family.

After his mother remarried, a teenage Bill moved back to Chinatown, graduated from high school and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps. He was drafted in 1942 at the height of World War II and fought in active combat in Europe. Bill says there must have been a lucky star over him during his years on the front line, for he was one of only three soldiers out of 257 in his company who survived. He received the Bronze Star for heroism when released in 1945. The love of the service was in his blood and five years later, he reenlisted to fight in the Korean War with the 8th Army. There, Infantryman Wong demonstrated extraordinary heroism in action and



was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by command of Lieutenant General Van Fleet. Bill enjoyed the military life in spite of the war. “I probably would have stayed in the army as I do think of those years as the best times of my life. I guess I liked the excitement of wartime, even though seeing your buddies wounded or killed was something no one could ever enjoy living through. Having been an only child, I guess I liked the closeness to our buddies that we felt because we all depended on each other, oftentimes for our lives,” he recalls.

Following four months recovering from his war wounds at Letterman Hospital, Bill worked for a trucking firm and retired after 40 years. His volunteer life began in 1987 after a chance meeting. “I came with my good friend Penny Wong, who incidentally was the first Miss Chinatown of San Francisco, when she was meeting with Self-Help’s Volunteer Coordinator to find ways she could help out. I ended up with the job in charge of collecting and counting the daily lunch tickets for the senior nutrition program. I work at least 10 hours weekly overseeing about 2,000 meal tickets, but it is all sheer pleasure because I work with staff members Yvonne and Helen, two of the nicest people I have ever met.”

Bill also donates time to the California Pacific Medical Center. “Getting old, some people say, is no fun,” he says with a laugh, “but I have found a purpose and new friends through volunteering at Self-Help, and it IS fun!”





*The Daly City Center at
St. Andrew's Parish Church serves
over 50 Filipino and Chinese Americans,
four days a week.*

Yan Wong Mei Wah

WHEN YAN WONG MEI WAH WAS BORN IN TAISHAN, GUANGDONG, CHINA, one would have thought that her life would be one of luxury, for her family was considered wealthy in their native village. She was one of the few fortunate young girls to receive a formal education. And although food was scarce in most of China, the family owned rice fields so they were able to get by. Life became difficult when war broke out with Japan, however, and money stopped coming from Mei Wah's father who was then living in Canada.

Like most girls in her time, Mei Wah's marriage was arranged by a village matchmaker. At 16, she married a man seven years older from a wealthy neighboring village family. After the birth of their oldest daughter, her in-laws were badly punished by the new Communist government because of their wealth. During this ordeal, her husband suffered a nervous breakdown. Her father-in-law was able to procure false documents to bring his son to Hong Kong, but Mei Wah was forced to stay in China with her baby daughter and her ailing mother-in-law. Five years later, the family brought Mei Wah and her daughter to Hong Kong. But her husband remained in frail mental health and was never able to work again. The responsibility of supporting the family fell solely on Mei Wah.

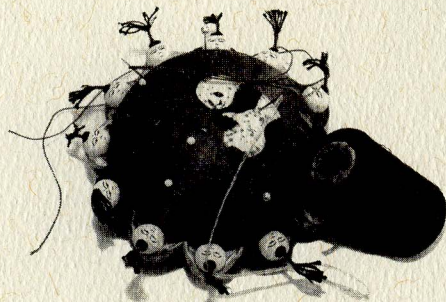
"Our life in Hong Kong was very hard," she recalls. "We could only rent a bunk bed for five of us and our daughter usually slept on



the floor. While I worked at the factory, I would always worry about my two sons and daughter, for we could never tell when my husband would be attacked by his mental depression. I lived in constant fear and had a hard time keeping a stable job. Sometimes I did not know where the next meal was coming from."

Conditions improved greatly in 1976 when Mei Wah's daughter, now married and living in the United States, brought her family to San Francisco's Chinatown. Always resourceful and willing to work for necessities, Mei Wah toiled in a sewing factory and eventually found a permanent dishwashing job in a restaurant. A co-worker at the restaurant introduced Mei Wah to Self-Help for the Elderly. "I enlisted Self-Help when they were located at Old Chinatown Lane. They helped me find medical services for my husband and referred him to a community mental health program. A few years ago, I needed to put my mother in a nursing home. This was a difficult emotional time for me and Self-Help was there when I needed someone to turn to," she recalls.

Still active and healthy at 64, Mei Wah is openly appreciative and grateful for the help she has received. Despite hardships and struggles, she remains supportive and caring, unwilling to let her husband's poor mental and physical health wear her down. Her proudest achievement has been devoting most of her life to her family, as a daughter, wife and mother.





甄黃美華

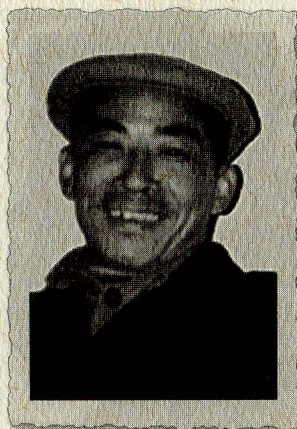
*The Nutrition Program
uses over 52,000 pounds
of rice a year.*

Yee Kwong Yim

AFTER A DIFFICULT LIFE IN CHINA, Yee Kwong Yim moved to the United States in 1986. Sponsored by his brother-in-law, he and his family waited 10 years before they were allowed to enter the country. The Yees arrived with hopes for a better future and education for their children.

Kwong Yim came to America in 1986 and immediately began a series of low-paying jobs in restaurants and in garment factories doing ironing or button-fixing work that required long hours and took a heavy toll on his already poor health. But through a friend, he learned about the training programs at Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE). Studying hard to learn housekeeping skills, a far cry from his former job as an honored schoolteacher, Kwong Yim graduated in 1987 and has held part-time housekeeper positions since then. "I love this job because it provides me with a financial source to support my family and a sense of achievement to serve the community. All of my employers regard me with respect while appreciating my service, and many even treat me like their own family members," he proudly states.

And unlike the frail, physically and mentally beaten-down individual he was 10 years ago, today Kwong Yim is a robust 61-year-old who

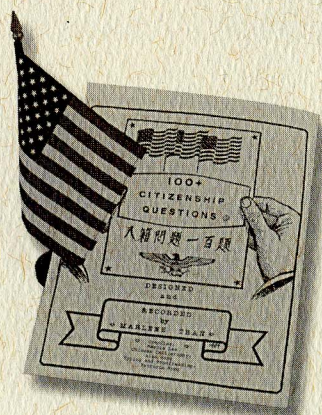


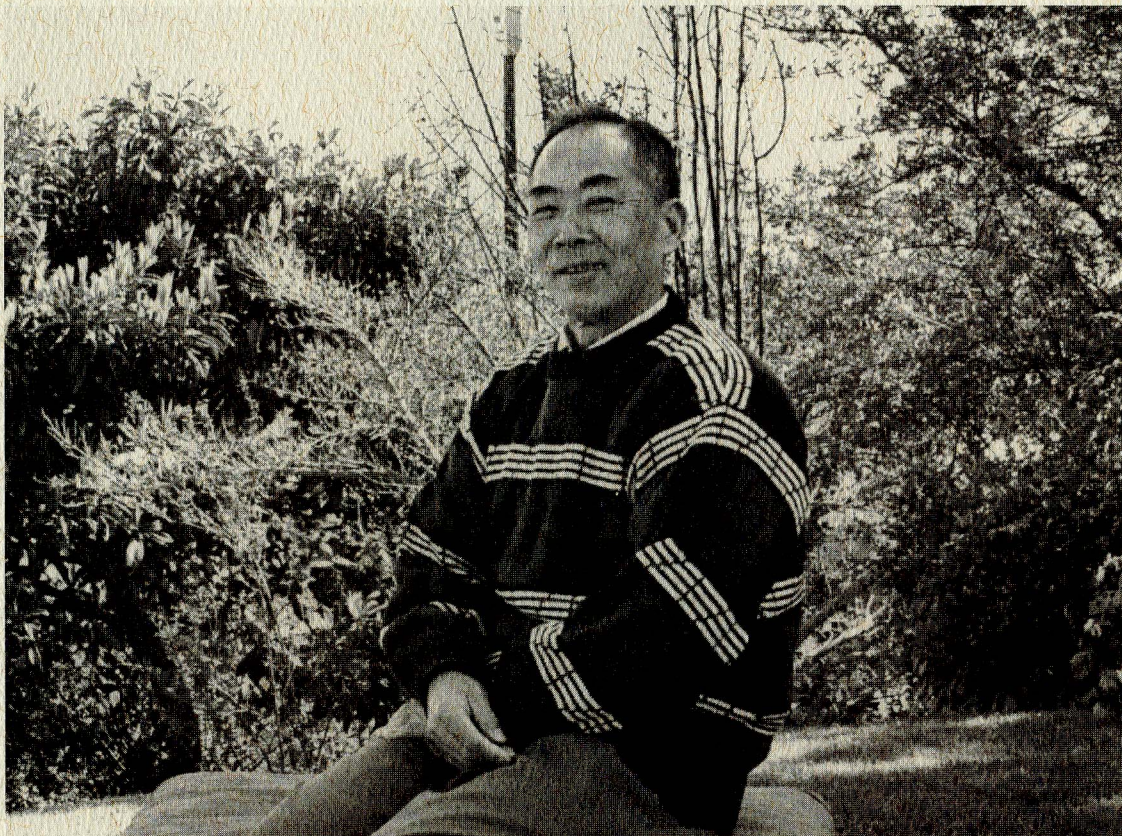
feels at peace. His greatest pride is in his family's achievements. His wife continues to work in a garment factory and his son and two daughters are well established with university educations and professions.

Kwong Yim has many good things to say about SHE's services, noting, "It helps many monolingual Chinese seniors improve the quality of life in so many ways. Self-Help staff makes you feel like you are a part of a big family and when I eventually retire, I look forward to working as a volunteer with its programs or activities."

SHE staff who work with Kwong Yim agree that he is one of the most dedicated and hard-working housekeepers in the program, never turning down difficult assignments. He is often referred to as the "model worker" to other students in the Housekeeping Training Classes.

Kwong Yim feels his quality of life has improved a lot over the past years. His greatest pleasure is the happiness he has found in his close-knit family. He is grateful to be in the United States and has one special goal—he is studying very hard to take the naturalization test examination in 1996. "My greatest satisfaction would be finally becoming a citizen of this wonderful land of freedom!"





余廣炎

*Once SHE moved to its
headquarter building on Sansome Street,
the agency became a one-stop center
for comprehensive services.*

Yu Yuen Yick

AT AN AGE WHEN MANY AMERICANS LOOK FORWARD TO RETIREMENT, 58-year-old Yu Yuen Yick was looking for his first job here. He and his wife had just arrived from China, after waiting two years to immigrate. Their wait could have even been longer had his family not obtained their passports by going through the “back door and paying bribes.” “I lived in an era of extreme turmoil in China through the Japanese occupation, civil war and cruel Communist rule. My ultimate dream was to leave China and come to America in search of the freedoms we had lost,” recalls Yuen Yick.

Upon his arrival in America, Yuen Yick immediately sought work to support his family. Not wanting to further burden his son and not expecting his new country to take care of him, he joined the Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) Housekeeping Training Class and graduated from the program in 1982. Although he spoke minimal English, Yuen Yick was sent to work as a housekeeper in Caucasian homes where he was very well-liked. Many of his former employers are still his good friends although he retired in 1988. Today, at 71, Yuen Yick serves as president and chairman of the Housekeeping Alumni Association, an organization of over 100 members who chose him as their leader.

Considering Yuen Yick's background, one might be surprised that he would be happy doing menial housework. Born in Guang-



zhou, China, he moved to Macao where he was educated and graduated from Middle School in 1942. He loved the arts and was a bright and happy student. Returning to China, he eventually worked in a bank and as a well-respected white collar worker. However, during the Cultural Revolution, educated people like Yuen Yick suffered from discrimination and persecution.

Yuen Yick's life has turned full circle and his dreams have come true. His family is close by and he sees his sons, daughter and six grandchildren often. Hampered in activity by only a slight limp, but otherwise healthy, he continues coming to Chinatown almost daily to meet

friends or participate in SHE's activities. “Every day, I read newspapers, watch TV, sing Chinese opera songs and attend many public exhibitions or entertainment programs. I go to my family association in Chinatown where I am only too happy to volunteer and help serve my fellow Chinese countrymen.”

Yuen Yick concludes with a smile, “I am only one of the typical Chinese immigrants who came from China to settle in the United States at a very late age. Now that I have the freedom I sought after for so long in China, my life is happy. When I see the young people here in America, I wonder if they realize how much more fortunate they are than those of us in my generation. They didn't have to go through the difficult times of living in a country at war.”





*The first Self-Help for the Elderly
program outside San Francisco
was the Palo Alto Center, opened
in 1989 at Lord's Grace Church.*

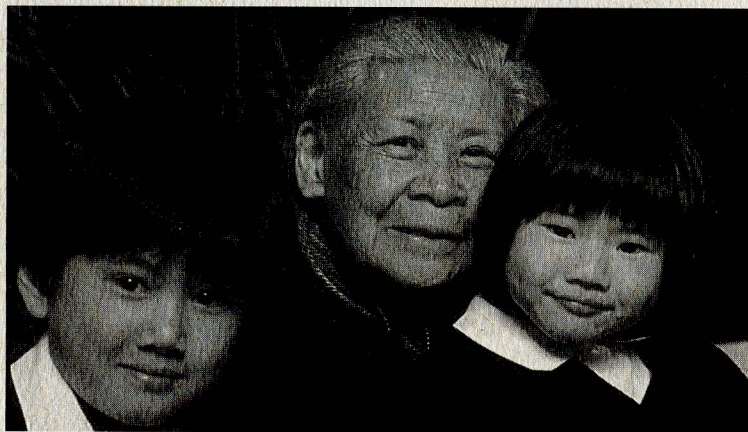
Strength Hope Empower- ment



Self-Help for the Elderly: 30 Years in the Making

FOR 30 YEARS, SELF-HELP FOR THE ELDERLY (SHE) has worked with seniors to preserve their dignity and independence in their own communities. SHE has weathered the roughest storms and stayed afloat. With every crisis, the organization has never lost sight of its mission and commitment to serve the elderly and empower them to help themselves.

SHE emerged from the community to serve the community. Responding to a dire need in Chinatown to assist culturally and socially isolated seniors and those with very limited incomes, SHE has grown into a prominent organization serving well over 25,000 seniors a year in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The



agency is recognized and respected throughout the United States and its programs are modeled nationally.

SHE first opened its doors at 3 Old Chinatown Lane in the heart of San Francisco's Chinatown on August 16, 1966 with a staff of only 10 people. Established as a "War on Poverty" program with funding from the Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) and sponsorship from the San Francisco Council of Churches, SHE provided a unique blend of services: hot meals specifically prepared for elderly Asians, social services, housing assistance and employment.

The organization quickly flourished. In 1971, SHE incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization; established its first meal site for seniors at Cumberland Church in Chinatown; and also participated in the First White House Conference on the Aging. But in 1972, government cutbacks seriously jeopardized SHE's major source of funding from the EOC. For three months, the staff worked without paychecks. Fortunately, the agency weathered its first crisis and learned a valuable lesson. In order to meet the growing needs of the community, the Board and staff began to explore alternate funding sources.

During the early to mid-1970s, SHE underwent its first major growth period, creating programs in emergency in-home support services, mental health counseling, elder abuse services, building repair and remodeling, legal services, home delivered meals and nutrition. The Senior Employment and Training Unit was launched through a contract/grant from the Comprehensive Employment Training Act

(CETA) Program. An Older Americans Act grant allowed the employment programs to be expanded from Housekeepers Training to the Home Health Aide demonstration program.

In 1976, four years after its initial application, SHE became a member agency of the United Way, receiving \$50,000 in funding to provide social services to seniors 45 to 60 years old. Later, needing more room to expand, SHE moved to new offices at 640 Pine Street allowing the organization to coordinate its services and transform itself into a one-stop multi-purpose senior service agency.

During its first 15 years, SHE quickly grew, gaining respect and admiration in the community. But it was during the 1980s that SHE forged its future direction and established itself as one of the premier multi-service organizations for seniors. Programs and services were blended to form a continuum of care and activity centers became focal points for seniors. As the needs of the elderly changed and increased, so did SHE's services.

One of SHE's first priorities during the 1980s was to diversify funding sources and explore creative fundraising ventures. In 1981, the organization held its first annual celebration dinner to benefit senior programs. Four years later, famous Cantonese Opera diva Law Yim Hing sponsored a benefit opera for the Pine View Housing Project. The three-day event grossed over \$100,000 and paved the way for other successful events. That same year, SHE organized and held the first annual Golden Gait Walkathon which would later become a major fundraising event.

In 1983, the Home Health Care Program was established to meet the rising needs of monolingual or limited-English speaking elderly populations. The program was licensed as a home health





agency by the State of California and Medicare-certified to provide bilingual/bicultural skilled nursing, physical, occupational and speech therapy.

In 1986, SHE's Board of Directors and staff conducted their first strategic planning process which included a comprehensive evaluation of the agency. This was used to develop and map a five-year plan from 1987 to 1991. The Self-Help for the Elderly Foundation was later formed to coordinate fundraising efforts. Leonard Ho, a Hong Kong philanthropist, was appointed the Far East Regions Fundraising Chair. Through his commitment and leadership, Asian superstars like Jackie Chan and Anita Mui came to San Francisco to assist in Self-Help's fundraising events.

But the building of the Pine View Senior Housing Project in San Francisco, later renamed the Lady Shaw Senior Center, was

perhaps SHE's greatest achievement during the 1980s. This project was initiated to address an immediate need for decent and affordable housing in the Chinatown/North Beach area. By 1980, Chinatown had lost much of its affordable housing, especially for the elderly. The stock of affordable housing was down to less than 400 government-subsidized units, most of which were tiny, sub-standard, unsanitary, dangerous and certainly not enough to accommodate the increasing elderly population.

In 1984, SHE received a \$3.6 million grant from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) to build a 70-unit housing project for Chinatown seniors. But the project almost didn't get off the ground—for the next few years, it became entangled in governmental bureaucracy. Funding an \$8 million project and finding land space large enough to build on were not easy tasks in an already



crowded Chinatown. Finally in 1988, project planners led by board member Rosalyn Koo and with help from local lawmakers, took advantage of a new and unique concept called “air leasing.”

Former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein and Supervisor John L. Molinari secured the air space above the Broadway Tunnel on Mason Street for the “land” to build the housing project. By now, SHE had obtained major funding from the City of San Francisco and from private donors like Hong Kong philanthropist Sir Run Run Shaw, who donated \$800,000. Then U.S. Senator Pete Wilson also appealed to HUD on behalf of SHE and was able to increase federal funding for the project.

Reflecting the dire need for decent housing, over 3,000 low-income seniors applied for the Lady Shaw Senior Center, although only 70 units were available. After a stringent screening process and review, those who qualified were selected by lottery. In October 1990, 74 seniors moved into their new homes at Lady Shaw Center. These rent-subsidized units were the first new units of low-income housing in the Chinatown/North Beach area in over 10 years.

As part of its 1987-1991 Five-Year Plan, SHE expressed a commitment to serve the elderly population in the Peninsula. The first step outside of San Francisco was taken in 1989 with the establishment of the South Bay Center at Lord's Grace Church in Palo Alto. Much of the credit for this expansion is attributed to members of the South Bay Chinese Tennis Club who worked relentlessly during the developmental phases to raise seed capital to begin the center. This later led to the creation of a South Bay Chapter for SHE. In 1992, with funding from the Aging and Adult Services of San Mateo County, SHE opened a center in San Mateo's Central Park. The

South Bay and San Mateo centers provided the cornerstones for programs in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

During the 1990s, SHE built on the strong foundation set during the previous decade. In 1991, a Strategic Planning Committee of representatives from chapter boards, standing committees and individuals in the community reviewed goals and accomplishments, then developed a 1992-1997 Strategic Plan & Vision, SHE's blueprint for the 21st Century.

In 1992, SHE moved into its first permanent home at 407 Sansome Street in San Francisco. Later that year, Self-Help for the Elderly-Santa Clara County received nonprofit status and became an affiliated organization.

In the short span of five years, SHE began its Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center for seniors afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease





or related dementia; opened Leonard House and Sunrise Center, two residential care homes to accommodate seniors who could no longer live independently; established roots in San Mateo County with the opening of the San Mateo and Daly City Senior Centers; and added Hospice services to the Self-Help HomeCare program.

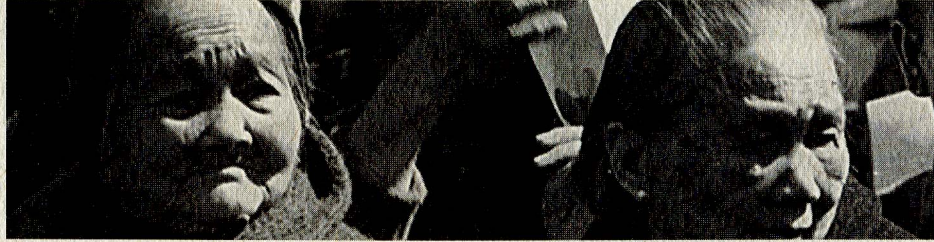
In 1995, Self-Help for the Elderly won another HUD award to begin a 15-resident Alzheimer's residential care home in San Francisco. The San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing pitched in with matching funds to acquire and renovate the project. When renovations are completed in 1997, a continuum of services from day care to homecare to residential care will be offered to Alzheimer's patients. SHE has furthered its commitment to the community with the Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) program. Established in 1996 in partnership with St. Mary's Medical Center, the program is an important addition to existing day care services.

The phenomenal growth of SHE during the past 30 years is an affirmation of the demand for much-needed senior services in the community. But none of this work would have been accomplished without the dedication of volunteers and staff. The key to SHE's success has and always will be the commitment and vision of its volunteers, board members and staff, combined with the vitality of its seniors.

As SHE stands poised to meet the new challenges of the next millennium, it will remain committed to meeting the changing needs of the community and providing a support system for the elderly, particularly those who are low-income and culturally isolated. SHE stands for Self-Help for the Elderly and also for the three principles our seniors aspire to: Strength, Hope and Empowerment.

30-Year Timeline

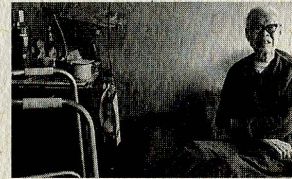
1966



1971

Self-Help for the Elderly participates in the first White House Conference on the Aging. SHE is used as a model aging program serving an ethnic community.

AUGUST 16
Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) opens its doors at 3 Old Chinatown Lane.



Self-Help for the Elderly is incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization.

First meal site for seniors opens at Cumberland Church.

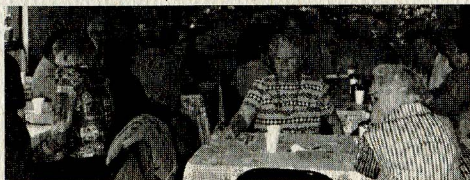


1972



Housekeepers Training Program begins.

1973



Nutrition Program begins, under contract with the State Department On Aging.



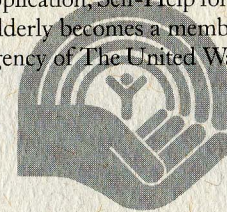
1974

Nutrition Program adds new sites in Aquatic Park, Downtown Senior Center, Telegraph Hill and Jean Parker School.



Senior Employment and Training Unit begins with help from a Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) contract.

Four years after initial application, Self-Help for the Elderly becomes a member agency of The United Way.

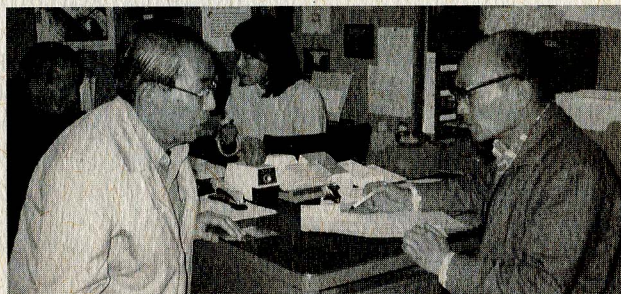


Home Health Aide Training begins as a demonstration program with a grant from the Older Americans Act.



1976

1976



1978

Self-Help for the Elderly moves from Old Chinatown Lane to 640 Pine St. and becomes a one-stop multi-purpose service program.

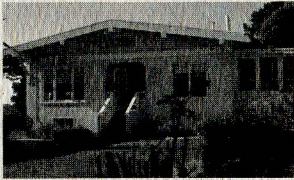


1981

Self Help for the Elderly holds its First Annual Fundraising Dinner to benefit senior programs, honoring the late Cyril Magnin.



1982



Richmond District Nutrition Program begins providing meals and support services.

Chinatown Nutrition Program finds permanent home at Geen Mun Center.



1983

DECEMBER 5

Self-Help HomeCare is established. It is licensed by the State of California to provide skilled nursing and home health services.



1984

Self-Help for the Elderly receives \$3.6 million grant from U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a 70-unit housing project for low-income seniors.

1985

Self-Help for the Elderly holds its first annual Golden Gait Walkathon.



The board of directors conducts a comprehensive self-evaluation and Strategic Planning Process to develop a Five-Year Plan for 1987-1991.

1986

1986

1988

AUGUST 9

The Self-Help for the Elderly Foundation is incorporated.

Self-Help for the Elderly moves to 445 Grant Ave.



Amber Glow Residential Care Home opens in San Francisco.

1989

Construction for Lady Shaw Senior Center and housing complex begins above the Broadway Tunnel.

South Bay Advisory Board is formed.

Self-Help for the Elderly opens the Palo Alto Center, its first program in Santa Clara County.

1990

Leonard House Residential Board and Care Home opens.

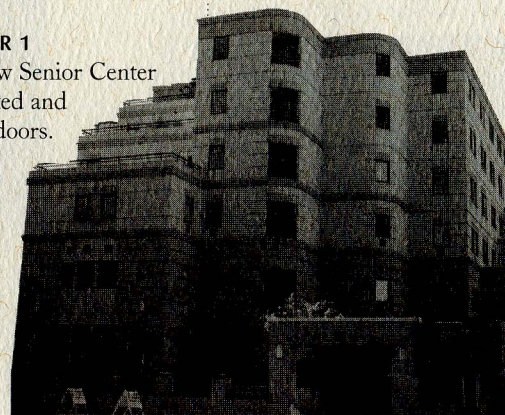
Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) opens.

JUNE

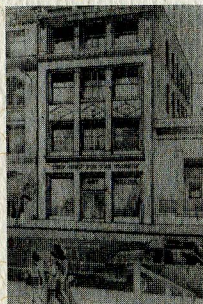
The Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center begins serving seniors afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia.

NOVEMBER 1

Lady Shaw Senior Center is completed and opens its doors.



1992



APRIL

Self-Help for the Elderly moves to its first permanent home at 407 Sansome St.

JULY 11

Self-Help for the Elderly's first center in San Mateo opens.

The San Mateo Center adds the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP).

The South Sunset Center opens in the Sunset District.

1993

Self-Help for the Elderly — Santa Clara County receives its own nonprofit status and becomes an affiliated organization.



Sunrise Center begins serving the South Bay community.

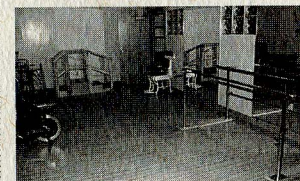
1994

The Daly City Senior Center, targeting Filipino American seniors, opens its doors at St. Andrew's Parish Hall.

1995



Self-Help HomeCare adds Hospice services to its program.



The Adult Day Health Care Program opens in San Francisco's Richmond District.



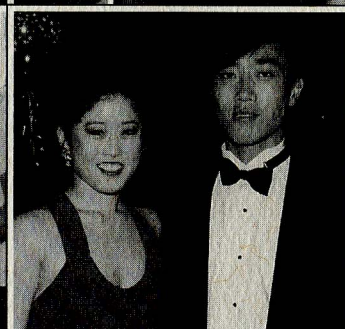
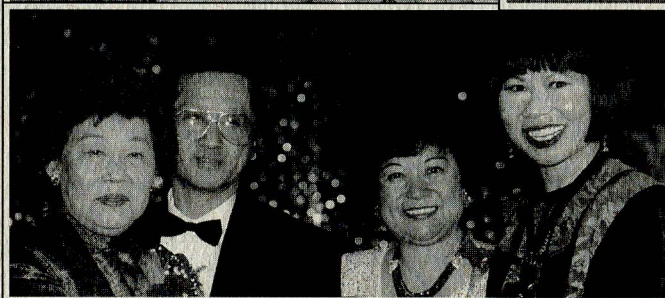
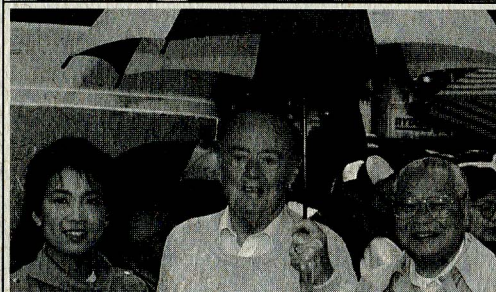
Self-Help for the Elderly begins a limited Chinese program at St. James Center in San Jose.

1996

Scrapbook













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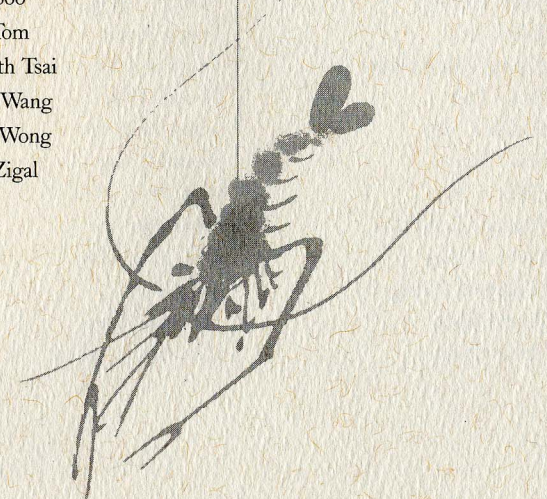
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MICHAEL CHAN, Photographer

Michael Chan came to the United States as a foreign student to study chemistry and microbiology. Sometimes referred to as a “grandmaster” in Silicon Valley due to his 25 years of experience in semiconductor processes and manufacturing, engineering and marketing, he is the founder of Mobile Entertainment, Inc. and holds a patent for a “Video Viewing System in a Vehicle.” Chan’s motto is “Embrace our cultural heritage to enhance our generations to come.” He has supported Self-Help for the Elderly for over 10 years and was instrumental in establishing their first fundraising efforts to open the South Bay Senior Center through events such as the Asian American Tennis Championship Tournament. A supporter of many cultural organizations, Chan is a recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellow Award for dedicated Humanitarian Service presented by the Lion’s Club International Foundation. His many hobbies include still and video photography.



DR. HUANG CHANG-JEN, Calligrapher

Dr. C.J. Huang was born in Hunan, China. He left Taipei, Taiwan in 1952 and immigrated to the United States, earning his master’s degree from the University of Michigan and his Ph.D of Human Letters from Central Connecticut State University. Huang was a successful businessman in pharmaceuticals and petroleum before retiring. His proudest accomplishment was in 1986 when he established the Ouyang Yu Experimental High School in China. Considered to be one of the top high schools in China today, the school houses over 1200 students and teachers. A long-time supporter of Self-Help for the Elderly, Huang’s belief that “helping others is the basis of happiness” is reflected in his many contributions to the community. He lives in Atherton, California where he enjoys classical music, swimming and Chinese calligraphy.



ROSALYN KOO, Advisor

Rosalyn Koo’s first venture into the public service arena was during the recession of the 1970s when she organized a Task Force on Unemployment under the sponsorship of the American Institute of Architects. She turned her energies to community causes after retiring from a 30-year career as Executive Vice President of MBT Associates, a major San Francisco design firm. One of Koo’s greatest achievements was her leadership of a six-year drive to construct the Lady Shaw Center, a 70-unit affordable housing project sponsored by Self-Help for the Elderly. In 1990, Koo assumed Directorship of the 1990 Institute, a U.S.-based think tank dedicated to economic and social reforms in China. She recently organized the Friends of the Chinatown Library Committee in San Francisco to raise funding for library upgrades and renovations. Born and raised in Shanghai, China, Koo attended Mills College and the University of California at Berkeley, where she earned a bachelor’s in Economics with honors. Koo resides in San Mateo with Karlson, her husband of 45 years, and has two daughters, Debbie and Jackie.



ADRIENNE PON, Editor

Adrienne Pon is Consumer Affairs Director for Pacific Telesis Group, San Francisco-based parent company of Pacific Bell. An advocate of building bridges between corporations and communities, she has supported numerous causes for Asian Pacific Americans, children, seniors and communities of color. Pon volunteers as a writer and editor in her spare time and is currently involved with many organizations, including vice president of the San Francisco Civil Service Commission, national chair-elect of the Asian Pacific American Women's Leadership Institute, director for Leadership California, and director/immediate past chair of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. A former Loaned Executive to the United Way of the Bay Area and a graduate of the Coro Foundation and Leadership California public affairs programs, Pon holds a master's degree in Public Affairs/Public Relations and a bachelor's in Health Education. Born and raised in San Francisco, she is a third-generation Chinese American and the daughter of a World War II veteran.



GERRYE WONG, Author

For over 15 years, Gerrye Wong has been a columnist/writer for Asian Week, a nationally distributed weekly newspaper, and Chinatown News, a Vancouver bi-monthly magazine. A fourth-generation Chinese American, she grew up in San Jose and Oakland, two cities where she taught elementary school for 30 years before retiring. A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Michigan, Wong is co-founder of the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, a museum of Chinese-American history that was given to the San Jose Historical Museum in 1991. She is currently spearheading a capital campaign for a museum/learning center in San Francisco's Chinatown on behalf of the Chinese Historical Society of America. A major supporter of senior causes, she serves as a Self-Help for the Elderly board member and as a Santa Clara County Senior Care Commissioner. Wong is celebrating her 40th wedding anniversary with her husband Calvin and is the proud mother of Dr. Michael Wong and Kelly Matsuura, as well as grandmother to three grandsons. Wong and her family live in Sunnyvale, California.



SUE WONG, Graphic Designer

Sue Wong is a talented graphic designer and owner of Sue Wong Designs based in San Francisco, California. A third-generation Chinese American, Wong's unique blend of modern and traditional Asian elements in visual design work have won her national recognition by corporations, government and nonprofit organizations. Her clients include Pacific Bell/Pacific Telesis Group, the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Institute, the Chinese Historical Society, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, the Older Women's League and numerous other organizations. Wong designed the cover of the 1992 Asian Pacific Heritage issue of Patriots, a nationally distributed magazine. She has worked on every aspect of design work from corporate logos to books and packaging for products. A recipient of the Volunteer of the Year award from Asians for Corporate and Community Action, Wong has provided pro bono services to many community groups and causes.



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