

To Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel with Love

It was by coincidence that I came to know the founding members of Love the Elderly & Children Foundation. From what I've known, the construction for the elderly hostel project was postponed soon after the land was purchased. I was aware that the Indo-Chinese community is indeed a very multicultural community and despite numerous efforts from earlier pioneers, it was not possible to raise significant funds for the construction of the project. In 2001, the Federal Government informed the organizers that if the construction of the hostel did not commence, the promise of funding by the government would be withdrawn.

Love the Elderly and Children Foundation was established to manage the construction and the running of the Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel. I was impressed by the motto of the Foundation. When I was asked to support the Hostel, I was very keen to participate and to assist in any way I could at that crucial point in time. It was therefore my pleasure to become one of its 31 founding Trustees.

Like a flash of lightning, ten years have passed. I have been involved in almost every aspect in running the organisation and have participated in projects organized by the Board of Trustees. I retired a few years ago and this project has become a new challenge for me. I enjoy my life as a retiree. In my spare time, I like to grow my own vegetables and share my harvest with my friends and even the residents in the hostel.

Among the trustees, Dr. Peter Wong and I are not from an Indo-Chinese background. I migrated from Hong Kong many years ago. However it doesn't stop us from becoming good friends and even like brothers and sisters. Mutual respect and trust is the way for us to get along.

I have great respect and empathy for the Indo-Chinese immigrants. As they fled from their country of origin to this foreign land, they must have encountered countless issues during the settlement period. The lack of social network and the existence of cultural differences must have made it difficult for them to integrate into our society initially. The phases that they have been through; settling down in a new environment, building up careers, businesses and bringing up their families are indeed very similar to my own personal experience.

Innumerable immigrants have, by different pathways, made their success in their new lives. Many have achieved brilliantly in their careers, be it academic, business enterprise or work in a profession of their choice. The Trustees of Love the Elderly and Children Foundation are no exception. Many have well established businesses or are highly qualified professionals, they have happy families and a whole new life in this promised land. With a keen desire to give something back to society, they in turn contributed to the Australian communities and became proud citizens of Australia.

The planning of the extension project commenced as I took over as the Sixth Chairman of the Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel. Many management meetings were held, and subjects being discussed were mainly focused on how to raise funds, applying for Government's approval for the number of placements, and obtaining low interest loans. After tremendous efforts, we had the initial ground-breaking ceremony on 14 September 2011. On 28 June 2012, we had a stone laying ceremony, where we witnessed the commencement of the Phase Two extension project.

Although the last ten years have been full of ups and downs, the Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel has earned a good reputation for the quality service we have been providing, as our staff are kind, friendly and dedicated to their duties.

The 'Love the Elderly and Children Foundation' has been established with the mission not just to take care of the elderly physically but also to enhance their mental well-being so that they can live a more fulfilling and enjoyable life. In conforming with the Confucius philosophy "to honor aged parents of others, as we do to our own aged parents; to care for other's children, as we do to our own", we hope we can set an example for the future generations. I feel there are two virtues that we must possess: One is filial piety and another is kindness. We cannot attain a higher level in our spiritual life unless we have both filial piety and kindness.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of 'Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel', I hope that under the leadership and efforts of our trustees, the hostel will continue to improve our services to the elderly. However, due to the huge amount of funding required to extend the hostel, we are now in debt, hence we need generous support from the communities to assist in whichever way they can in order for us to continue our work.

Congratulations from Mr. Eric Pang – Trustee Members and the 6th Chairman of Love the Elderly & Children Foundation.

