

CARE RESOURCES PROFILE ON LINH N.

A lifelong giver?

That would be Linh N.

During the course of her nearly 60 years, Linh has served in virtually every capacity imaginable to help make life easier for others, beginning way back as a young girl growing up in her home country of Vietnam.

At her parents' knees, she learned the value of community and how people need to reach out and support one another if the group as a whole is going to survive and thrive.

Inspired by that touchstone, she continued to embrace it after coming to the U.S. in 1989 when she was 22, the daughter of a Vietnamese woman and an American whom she says had served during the Vietnam War as an officer with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Linh found work in a Grand Rapids area restaurant that specialized in Vietnamese cuisine, later enrolling at Chic University of Cosmetology where she earned a license to style hair and perform manicures.

She worked in that capacity for the better part of a decade, then branched out to perform numerous jobs that put her face-to-face with others in the area's Vietnamese community. At one point, she owned a very popular coffee shop in Wyoming.

She combined those efforts with massive amounts of volunteering, and many in the Vietnamese are indebted to her for their transportation needs. She also served an untold amount of people who needed an interpreter to wade through bureaucratic red tape at courthouses, Secretary of State offices and the like.

"I never charged anybody – not even one dollar," says Linh, whose generosity is legendary among those in the Vietnamese community, a close-knit group who began trickling into West Michigan following the fall of Saigon in 1975 and were sponsored by members of Grand Rapids-area churches.

"It's a very tight community," she asserts, "and people came to know me, and came to understand what I could do to help them."

Stories about her giving nature are part of her legacy, including more than one instance where she has rallied others to pitch in so that a fellow countryman could afford a proper funeral.

“I like to help people,” she says, and that includes the friends and acquaintances she’s made here at Care Resource, where you’ll find her at least two days a week.

“This place offers such very good programs,” she says. “It takes care of me and so many other people, which makes me very happy and so appreciative.”

The mother of three grown children, Linh suffered a stroke at 58 that affects her left side and offers challenges with her speech and gait.

“I’m very grateful,” she says, “that I can come here and get physical therapy and occupational therapy, and someone even comes over to help me clean my apartment.”

People in similar circumstances, says Linh “would benefit from coming here as well, because they know how to provide the right kind of help.”

At Care Resources, says Linh, “they don’t treat you like a patient. They treat you like family.”

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