Giving Thanks & Giving Back

A Tiny Spark

The sounds of children laughing and talking echoed down the hallway. As the door to the St. Paul’s room opened, the children, sitting at the tables studying and joking with one another, created a delightful vibrancy. Assisting one young boy with his homework was Terry Leong, his smile lighting up the room.

Terry and his wife, Lianne, have been a part of the Cameron House community for several decades. They volunteer as tutors in the Bilingual Afterschool Program (BAP), cook for volunteer youth during the summer, support Cameron Carnival and other fundraiser events in many ways.

He recently took a moment to speak with us. Here are excerpts of that conversation:

How were you introduced to Cameron House?

I was introduced to CH at a very young age. My two older sisters (Judith Leong Mates and Myrnal Leong Hawes) were involved, so it was natural for me to do the same. My first introduction was a Saturday program called “Best Day of the Week” and then, of course, the summer program (Day Camp). I also remember the Bible study we had at Cameron House on Sundays.

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What is special about the Cameron House community?

The return of those who have gone through one or more of the programs. Past day campers come back as summer program leaders, summer program leaders come back as permanent employees, etc. Even those who don’t return to CH often cite their time here as an unforgettable learning experience that continues to help them in their current careers.

Why do you volunteer for BAP?

After I retired in 2010, I wanted to do volunteer work. Lianne has been volunteering as a BAP tutor for many years on Mondays, so I decided to volunteer on Tuesdays. I tell everyone that she brings me on Mondays and I bring her on Tuesdays. CH benefits by getting four times the number of volunteer hours, and we benefit by getting to know children one and two generations younger than us. Of course, the main benefit is to see that ‘ah ha!’ moment on the children’s faces when they finally grasp a concept. The giving is not all one sided, though. As an individual who has been out of school for a long time, and as a parent who now has self-sufficient adult children, coming back to a place with young children – in a

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