

Charlene Wong Overview

Charlene is a 60-year old retired nurse. She previously worked at the emergency department at St. Paul's Hospital. 2 years ago, she became widowed when her husband, Yi Chang Wong died from cancer at the age of 70. He was a college computer science professor. Charlene's only son, Eric Wong, is now 34 and lives in Hong Kong with his wife and 2 children, ages 6 and 8. Since she is retired, Charlene has a lot of free time to do recreational and social activities. She receives pension plan from the government and giving's from Eric's family in Hong Kong as her financial support. She lives alone, with a small white poodle, in a small apartment in West Vancouver.

Her friends all know her as the "social butterfly", with an out going personality and the heart to serve others before herself. She loves to travel with her friends. Recently, she just came back from a cruise from Hawaii with a couple of her close friends. She loves children and finding out what the young generation is doing, despite the unfamiliarity.

A Day in the Life

Charlene usually wakes up around 7 a.m. to tune in the morning news. She feels it is important to know the current events going on in the society, despite her age. Sometimes, she attends Chinese brunch (dim sum) gatherings with her friends. On Thursday mornings, she attends the West Vancouver Rotary Club meetings to keep active and stay committed in giving back to the community. After meetings, she usually goes grocery shopping or socializes with her usual group of friends for mahjong or afternoon tea. Often, she would spend the time baking her specialties and bring them to her neighbors and friends. Though Charlene drives, she likes to walk her dog around the park to enjoy the fresh air and take the time away from planning social events and volunteer work. On Sundays, she attends Chinese church to stay grounded. On weekends, Eric calls her to exchange updates about each other's lives. This is one of her favorite times during the week when she hears how her child and grandchildren are doing.

Work Activities

Charlene retired from St. Paul's Hospital 3 years ago, but misses the occupation and comfort of a stable job. Other than her involvement in the W.V. Rotary Club, she volunteers at St. Paul's Hospital and West Vancouver Youth Clinic occasionally when they need the extra hand, to keep her active and busy.

Household & Leisure Activities

Charlene watches a lot of television programs, such as news, stock channel, and Chinese dramas. She listens to the radio when she cooks or bakes. Since she

lives alone, she offers her cooking and baking to friends and neighbors. On holidays,

she visits her husband at the cemetery in the morning, and spends the holiday with her close friends. When she walks her dog, she likes to visit the coffee shop to chat with the workers and reminisce about the good olden days when she used to travel around the world. She likes to stay active, so Charlene usually becomes the event planner amongst her friends for trips, dinners, and gatherings.

Goals, Fears, and Aspirations

Her goal is to give back to the community as much as she can, while staying involved and relevant to the society. She strives to lead the younger generation to be more involved with community and helping out each other.

She accepts the natural aging process, but she fears the declining physical health since she likes to stay active and travel whenever she wants to. Her aspiration is to continue to be involved and help the society even after her retirement from being a nurse. As well, she wishes to stay positive and enjoy her life as much as possible.

Inspirations

Though she is not currently living with her family, Eric and her grandchildren are her support and inspiration behind her volunteer work motivations. She wishes to lead and teach, not only her offspring's but also the younglings she helps, by example. She believes in good deed and the power of individuals.

Technology Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

Charlene used to be able to type documents on the computer for work and use simple software such as Microsoft Word and Excel, however, due to her bad eyesight and the advancing technology, she feels she is incapable of keeping up with the changes. "Fancy looking gadgets" often intimidate her as her husband is usually the one that handles complicated technologies. She is used to rely on her husband for help in this area. Now, she only occasionally uses Hotmail to receive pictures Eric sends back from Hong Kong, though she much prefers physical copies of them. She has an old Nokia cell phone that she uses to contact her friends. However, she only uses the call function, as she does not feel the need or inclination to learn the other functions.

Physical Health

She is in relatively decent health condition, other than her bad eyesight. She realizes she gets tired more easily and often as her age increases. She tries to

keep active with all the activities she used to do before her retirement and eat as healthy as she can. She believes she is in a good shape for her age. She goes for body check-up's every half a year, as she is very aware of health issues.

Interview Data

Because Rotary Club is an international charity club, some of the activities involve traveling which inspires Charlene to do a lot of traveling whenever she can. She feels blessed by not only helping people in her community but also helping people in other countries that need help from Rotary Club.

Quote

"Home is whenever I'm with my friends and family."

"I love the feeling of knowing I made a difference in someone's life, regardless the size of the change."

"My age does not define who I am or what I am capable of doing."