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RNDC Work Location: California
Date of Hire: 1/29/2018



Why is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month important to you?

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month is important to me because it gives everyone an opportunity to learn about my heritage. It allows me to celebrate my ethnicity and bring awareness to my colleagues and friends. My family is bi-racial, and I love spending this month teaching my kids about my Asian culture, so they have a better understanding of what makes them who they are.

What would you like our RNDC family to know about you? Briefly tell us your story – personal and/or professional. What makes you uniquely you?

My parents immigrated to the United States in the 70's seeking a better life for my brother and me. I was born in Taiwan but grew up in California. English was my first language, Chinese was my favorite food, and most of my friends were white in the community where I lived. My parents, like many immigrants, worked hard to actualize their American dream. My brother and I were raised with the influence of our parents' culture as an important part of our upbringing. It was not until my high school years that I realized the sacrifices my parents had to make so that my life would be better than



theirs had been. I'd like to share a funny story with RNDC family: When my parents immigrated, I was only a year old. At the time, they decided to travel to the USA bringing along my older brother and they left me back in Taiwan. My parents made that tough decision because childcare would not be available for me due to their more than 14 hours work shifts every day. The two of them worked in a restaurant and wanted to simultaneously learn English while earning a living. After a few months they missed me, so my grandparents put me

on a plane by myself and flew me to the USA. They hired an airline attendant to hold me and feed me for the 14-hour journey. It seems crazy to think of this happening today, but I like to say I flew to the USA by myself.

What are some of the family traditions that celebrate your heritage?

Our family loves to do hotpot on Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. We sit at the dining room table for hours and cook in the hotpot until we can't eat anymore. My Italian in-laws now partake in the fun and my kids will out eat everyone.

What does the celebration and honoring of your culture mean to you and your family?

It is very important for me to honor my culture so my kids will learn more about themselves. They are getting to the age where they are becoming more aware of different races, and they ask lots of questions. I love that they're eager to learn.

Tell us about your favorite food, meal or beverage that reminds you of your heritage.

My favorite food that reminds me of my heritage is rice soup. It's simple but reminds me of my childhood. Anytime I was sick my, mom would make this for me and it was an instant comfort. To this day whenever I'm sick, I still only want rice soup.

