

Prompt:

How has your heritage affected your educational or professional career? Furthermore, how has your heritage influenced you into joining SAP-VN's Mobile Care mission in Vietnam?

I was born and raised in Westminster, a city more commonly known as Little Saigon. Summer of 2021, I excitedly started a new chapter of my life at UC San Diego; however, the excitement of newfound independence quickly gave way to homesickness. On that first night away from home, I already longed for the familiar comforts of home—the warmth of family, the aroma of traditional dishes, and the sense of belonging that came with being immersed in my cultural heritage.

Now in my third year at UCSD, I have found my home away from home. I volunteer at Dr. Viet Dao's family medicine clinic, nestled in the heart of City Heights and Linda Vista. These communities, much like Little Saigon, boast large Vietnamese populations but also struggle with significant poverty rates, surpassing the national average. Stepping into the clinic, surrounded by first-generation immigrant parents, I was immediately reminded of the struggles my own family faced whilst navigating healthcare.

For instance, I vividly recall an older Vietnamese couple who was struggling to navigate their healthcare due to being enrolled in different insurance groups. This discrepancy led to confusion and frustration as they attempted to coordinate their care between different providers. Through diligent advocacy, we were able to liaise with their insurance providers and facilitate a transfer to the same insurance group, thereby streamlining their healthcare journey and ensuring continuity of care.

Moreover, I observed firsthand the discomfort experienced by Vietnamese patients when referred to non-Vietnamese specialists. Recognizing the importance of cultural competence in healthcare, our clinic is always on the look-out for reputable Vietnamese-speaking specialists within the area to refer patients to, thereby bridging the gap in communication and ensuring culturally-sensitive care. Transportation emerged as another significant barrier to accessing healthcare for many older Vietnamese patients. I vividly recall an incident where a patient required assistance coordinating transportation home from the office. Due to the language barrier, a ride was mistakenly scheduled for 1:50 am instead of 1:50 pm, resulting in an hour-long wait for the patient.

Working alongside Dr. Dao and his team, I encountered numerous instances exemplifying the healthcare challenges faced by the Vietnamese community. As I reflect on these challenges, I am reminded of the importance of culturally competent care. I eagerly anticipate joining SAP-VN's Mobile Care mission to make a tangible difference in the lives of underserved populations in Vietnam.

Prompt:

Describe a woman in your life who has inspired you to pursue healthcare and make a difference in the lives of others. How would this scholarship help you follow in her footsteps?

My mother inspired me to pursue healthcare; otherwise I'd still dream of being a cashier at ABC Supermarket. My mother's influence on my decision to pursue a career in healthcare cannot be overstated. As a first-generation immigrant, she embodies resilience in the face of adversity, teaching me the invaluable lesson to never give up on my dreams. Growing up, witnessing her unwavering determination to provide for our family while caring for my autistic older brother has been nothing short of inspiring. Despite the challenges she faces, she continues to work tirelessly, balancing a full-time job at Bolsa Medical Group with the responsibilities of caregiving. Her resilience serves as a constant reminder that the only limits we face are those we place on ourselves.

In her role as a medical assistant, my mother's compassion shines through in every interaction she has with patients. I've had the privilege of accompanying her to work at Bolsa Medical Group, where I've witnessed firsthand her genuine care and concern for those she serves. She goes above and beyond to foster a positive and welcoming environment, staying in touch with patients and forming lasting bonds with them. Her ability to connect with people on a personal level, whether through sharing stories or simply lending a listening ear, is a testament to her innate compassion and empathy.

Inspired by my mother's resilience, selflessness, and compassion, I am motivated to walk the path she has paved and positively impact the lives of others. With the assistance of this scholarship, I can turn this aspiration into reality. I aspire to aid the underprivileged in Vietnam, drawing from personal experiences of navigating the healthcare system for my brother. Currently, I dedicate my time to volunteering with Vituity Cares, organizing monthly clinics for the growing homeless population in San Diego. Given my own encounters with home insecurity during elementary school, this opportunity feels particularly fulfilling. Looking ahead, one of my primary objectives is to support the disabled population in Vietnam. This is especially crucial in a setting where resources and discussions about disability are scarce, making my experience and empathy all the more valuable.