



2017 CSBG Success Story

Organization Name: El Centro de la Raza

Brief Project/Activity Description: The Food Bank provides bags of food to homeless and low-income individuals and families three days a week to stabilize households and reduce food insecurity.

Shue Li's Story:

Shue Li is originally from China. Having been here more than 7 years, Shue has had some time to adjust to her new country. With four kids, though, she runs around a lot. Cooking, cleaning, transportation, and all of the other responsibilities of motherhood mean that Shue's time often runs low. Saving time, and money, are essential to her responsibilities as a mother. That's what she values about El Centro de la Raza's food bank program.

Shue first heard about the program from someone she spoke with at a grocery store very near to El Centro de la Raza. After deciding to find out about the program for herself, she became a regular. Meat, eggs, and fresh fruits and vegetables are the items that she looks for on her visits. While these items can be hard to find, Shue also has found something of a community among other food bank participants.

Because El Centro de la Raza is located in a neighborhood historically inhabited by a large number of Chinese-descended individuals, a significant proportion of the people that the food bank program serves are immigrants of Chinese descent. The majority of these do not speak English, which can make communication difficult. Shue Li has been able to serve as something of a bridge. Having gained competency in the English language, she is able to facilitate communication among the participant population that only speaks Chinese, and the food bank facilitators, that speak no Chinese.

About two years ago, Shue Li learned about El Centro de la Raza's plan to construct two low-income apartment buildings. She sought the assistance of the food bank program coordinators in understanding and undertaking the process of application completion and submission on a number of occasions. On occasion after occasion, she related her desire to be one of those selected for the apartments, understanding that many more people applied than there were spaces available. After months of wondering, she expressed her happiness at having been selected.

Shue Li now lives in an apartment building adjacent to the main El Centro de la Raza. The location allows her to easily access the food bank. She is enjoying increased value from the low-income apartments, relative to her prior apartments, as well as her ability to access other services from El Centro de la Raza. Still, Shue Li continues to seek ways to save both time and money, these being essential to her responsibilities as a mother.