

We want to thank all of our story-tellers - our community. Our community is at the heart of our work, and we deeply appreciate all our story-tellers for taking the mic and sharing with us their stories. Thank you for your contribution.

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To find out more about Belong Aotearoa contact us on info@belong.org.nz

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#PASS THE MIC

HENDERSON - MASSEY

A book of stories shared by the diverse multicultural community of Henderson-Massey.



What does your name mean?

My name means one who is just and Basha is a position of decision making. My grandmother and dad named me.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I'm passionate about community and contributing to its growth. I work with several organisations and cherish the opportunity, to meet people and understand different cultures. What makes me tick is the endless possibilities and potential that can be harnessed with communities coming together. If I could do and see one thing; I'd like to see no one go hungry in Aotearoa and the world.

MY DAD, WHO IS NOT WITH US ANYMORE, STOOD UP FOR HIS VALUES AND HELPED HIS COMMUNITY... THAT SORT OF RUBBED OFF ON ME...

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

My community is empathetic and understanding, we reach out to our neighbours and those who need support. I grew up in a family environment, which is giving and caring. My dad, who is not with us anymore, stood for values and helped his community, in whatever way he could. That sort of rubbed off on me and I would give my time outside of work to various organisations from rotary to environment projects, as time permitted.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

My journey was quite unique. I always wanted to go to Aotearoa since

my childhood, especially after watching 1991-2 World Cup Cricket. I was working in Dubai and one day, my boss walked into our office and asked "who wants to go New Zealand?", as we are moving our department there. I was in my twenties so I was like "OK" I've always



wanted to go NZ, I might as well go see, explore and after that I can make a choice about my future if anything.

When I came here in early 2000s living close to my office at Queen St, I felt this place was too quiet for my liking, not much energy and very laid back. While involved in my initial office set-up which took most of my time, after a couple of months I had the opportunity to drive to the country side (which is still my favourite thing to do) and that's when I fell in love with Aotearoa. The beauty and splendour grips and captures you!

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

We are a proud nation of 5 million that stays together during tough times and rides through it as one, He Waka Eke Noa. Our potential lies in our diversity, the richness we have that we bring from various cultures. We need to work together, explore, utilise, and tap this unlimited potential with a shared vision to take Aotearoa New Zealand far ahead. We need to empower and provide tools to our communities to make our nation even better.

AIDA FABIAN



What does your name mean?

My name was given to me by my parents.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I am a community advocate. My biggest dream is to have a wonderful family.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

I would probably write something about our culture, specifically the values.

I AM A COMMUNITY ADVOCATE. MY BIGGEST DREAM IS TO HAVE A WONDERFUL FAMILY.

OUR STORIES

AT FIRST, IT WAS QUITE DIFFICULT LIVING IN ANOTHER PLACE AS WE DON'T HAVE ANY RELATIVES TO HELP US HERE. WE THEREFORE LEARNED HOW TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT.



Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

At first, it was quite difficult living in another place as we don't have any relatives to help us here. We therefore learned how to be self-sufficient.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

I would just like to say how lucky we are to be now living here in Aotearoa New Zealand.



What does your name mean?

I am named after my adopted grandfather (my dad's father). My dad was adopted into another part of our family. My parents gave me my name.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

My ultimate dream was to work in the police force but there have been a lot of setbacks with the application process. I've always wanted to make a difference with my life. My hope in life is for me and my family to live life to the fullest where we are not driven by debt but can live and give comfortably, to help those in need and to be a good example for our daughter.

MY HOPE IN LIFE IS FOR ME AND MY FAMILY TO LIVE TO THE FULLEST... AND BE A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OUR DAUGHTER.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

Our Samoan life is simple but very rich! I feel it is taken for granted sometimes because the outlook of our people today is they want what the western world has to offer, rather than looking at what they have in front of them and building on what both worlds have to offer.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

At first, I was so excited because I came here for love although I was scared of the unknown because I didn't know much. My English was

limited and I wasn't sure if I would be good at anything. Although living and working in a foreign country is daunting and extremely uneasy, I am thankful for those close to me and around me who have helped me become more confident and aware of my own abilities. To believe in myself even if I had to start from the bottom, up.



I AM THANKFUL FOR THOSE CLOSE TO ME AND AROUND ME WHO HAVE HELPED ME BECOME MORE CONFIDENT AND AWARE OF MY OWN ABILITIES.

Expanding my knowledge, English, skills, work, church, travelling, relationships, friendships and schooling. I've seen many different parts of New Zealand as well as overseas and this would not have happened if I remained in Samoa. The work experiences have opened my eyes to diversity not only with language but different cultures.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

To really appreciate the indigenous people and also those of diversity, the land, the sea. I've come from a small country to one that stands out amongst the bigger countries and we should embrace every part of NZ. I would like to say how blessed this country is and we shouldn't become complacent.

ANONYMOUS



What does your name mean?

My name means (noor) light.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I am a teacher and a human like everyone else. We all deserve to be treated fairly regardless of educational background.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

Let's work hand-in-hand together to make a difference in our community. Do volunteer work to build on relationships and friendships. Share the aroha with everyone doing kind things for people so one day it might come back to us.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER HAND-IN-HAND TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY. DO VOLUNTEER WORK TO BUILD ON RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDSHIPS.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

It was an interesting experience indeed because it was nice to be in such a big country. I was born in Fiji so wasn't used to seeing big clean

I HAD A HARD TIME MAKING FRIENDS AT SCHOOL BECAUSE I COULDN'T COMMUNICATE WITH THEM.



cities and suburbs. It was a bit tough for me because English is my second language so I didn't know how to speak English before I migrated to New Zealand. I had a hard time making friends at school because I couldn't communicate with them. I also found it hard to go places because some people would say racist and nasty things. I did not find that sense of belonging here. However, with time it passed and I learned to speak very good English with the help of some kind and supportive neighbours and friends from school and the Mount Roskill community.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

We should treat everyone fairly and equally. We all deserve that sense of belonging so we are not living our lives under the impression that we are not wanted here. We have a lot to offer because of our diversity. We can be teachers and educate; doctors and save lives; police officers and keep our community safe and protected.

ANONYMOUS



What does your name mean?

My name is derived from Madhav, a name ascribed to Lord Krishna (it will require an extensive thesis to explain Him).

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

Time has moved on; my time in this material world is limited. I have had a great life growing up in Fiji, serving in that Public Service and then arriving in NZ as a result of upheavals there in 1987. NZ welcomed us with open arms and we have always felt like we belonged here. After serving in the NZ Public Service for about 22 years, I now enjoy my retirement volunteering and lending my governance experience to a number of organisations.

My hope is for a peaceful future for this country (and the world) and that my mokopuna will grow up to achieve their goals and contribute to wellbeing for everyone.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

It is a great place where I live, people are friendly and they go about generally minding their own business.

MY HOPE IS FOR A PEACEFUL FUTURE FOR THIS COUNTRY (AND THE WORLD)...

OUR STORIES

MOVING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY HAS THAT ADDED DIMENSION OF BEING WITH A MIX OF PEOPLE, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS BUT THROUGH OUR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELS AND WORKING WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES AND BACKGROUNDS, WE FOUND INTEGRATION REASONABLY EASY.



Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

There is always apprehension when you move to a new place. Moving to another country has that added dimension of being with a mix of people, customs and traditions but through our international travels and working with people from other cultures and backgrounds, we found integration reasonably easy. Much credit goes to how welcoming everyone has been.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

It is a great country; let's make it even better!



What does your name mean?

Arizona means small spring. I was named after the south western state in the United States where I was born. I was originally named Terri (middle name) after my mother's close cousin who lived in American Samoa. My father named me Arizona while on missionary work in Phoenix.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I wish to travel with my friends, experience and try new things, to see the world. Learn about other places, cultures, food, traditions, and make new friends. I want to live my life to the fullest and tell my experiences through the tales I will write.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

The community I lived in in America had many challenges. There were shootings, robberies, killings and fights every week that were reported on the news. Arizona is very dry and hot so there wasn't much greenery but I liked the heat. Besides that I had a lovely home (in my eyes) and kind hearted neighbours that we played with after school. Sierra Madre and Rogers Ranch is a beautiful place with a hearty community despite the challenges.

I WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE TO THE FULLEST AND TELL MY EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE TALES I WILL WRITE.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

I was not happy at all. I argued and even offered to stay with family members in Arizona. Saying goodbye to my brother, my sister-in-law,

NOW I HAVE NICE AND HELPFUL FRIENDS WHO HAVE HELPED ME SETTLE IN.



and my dog was the hardest thing I had to do. I cried. I had just left my most loved ones and my best friends. I had a terrible gut feeling from the flight in Hawaii to New Zealand. What I liked the most when I arrived in New Zealand was being reunited with my three older brothers. Adjusting to a new life, new family, and new school was hard and still is. Now I have nice and helpful friends who have helped me settle in.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

Stay peaceful and a kind island – be less like America. Be known as the place of the un-chaotic!

BETTY CHING



My name is Betty and my grandmother named me.

I live in Onehunga but soon am moving to Massey. I have three children - one daughter and two boys and we arrived in 2006. I like New Zealand because government is very good; it is clean here and there is no COVID. When we first arrived I could not speak any English and was directed to ESOL and am learning how to speak English language.

*I LIKE NEW ZEALAND
BECAUSE GOVERNMENT IS
VERY GOOD; IT IS CLEAN
HERE AND THERE IS NO
COVID.*

OUR STORIES

I CAME HERE TO NEW ZEALAND FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY.



Something I wish people knew about me is that when I first arrived, I couldn't speak English but it is getting better. I also want to own my own business and, to me, education is very important. The political situation in my country, Myanmar, is very bad and that's why I came here to New Zealand for a better life for me and my family. It was so

hard at first because we didn't know anyone, we didn't know about schools, hospitals but the government was so supportive, and we had help with a case manager who showed us and took us to WINZ, to schools. Slowly we got there. Sometimes we cry because we miss our country but it is getting a little bit better now.



I arrived in New Zealand in 2008 and I have three children - a 14 year old, 12 year old and a 9 year old - and we live in Massey. Every morning we have many blessings! My grandmother named me.

In 2011, I studied an English course and since then I keep practising and learning English language. Through the WISE Women Collective I was able to exhibit my hand made blanket in the Auckland War Memorial Museum - a huge achievement; so amazing, never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that would happen. In 2013, my husband left us and did not return. I am now a solo mum.

THROUGH THE WISE WOMEN COLLECTIVE, I WAS ABLE TO EXHIBIT MY HAND MADE BLANKET IN THE AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM - A HUGE ACHIEVEMENT; SO AMAZING, NEVER IN MY WILDEST DREAMS DID I THINK THAT WOULD EVER HAPPEN.

OUR STORIES

NOW I HAVE MY FULL DRIVER'S LICENSE, I WANT TO HELP OTHERS WHO END UP IN MY SITUATION.



God is good and the New Zealand government is supportive. When we first arrived in NZ I had very young children and one year later my husband left. I could not drive, life was so hard. It was hard to engage in any activities but the WISE Women Collective, was so supportive. Now I have my full driver's licence, I want to help others who end up in my situation. I had to learn to stand on my own two feet. I didn't want to rely on others so I got down on my knees and prayed to God for energy and strength. Now my children are growing up, I am 100% convinced

that God has blessed my children and me. I want them to own a business, to be a doctor or to work in supportive roles.

In Myanmar the government is hard but when we arrived here we were supported. We had an interpreter which made me feel so much more at ease.



What does your name mean?

The name was given to me by my parents, it was probably the common name at the time.

MY BIGGEST DREAM OR WISH IS FOR MY SONS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I am a sports enthusiast. My biggest dream or wish is for my sons to be successful in life.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

I would probably write something about how humanity has reached or is about to reach its peak.

OUR STORIES

IT WAS A CHALLENGE, NEW CULTURE, NEW SURROUNDINGS, NEW WEATHER BUT WE MANAGED TO ADAPT.



Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

It was a challenge, new culture, new surroundings, new weather but we managed to adapt.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

We were lucky to have moved here, especially during this time of the pandemic.

FATIMA QESARI



My father named me and my name comes from the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. A lot of Muslim women are named in honour of her.

One thing I would like people to know about me is that I pray daily, five times a day. I pray for my son who does not live here with me in New Zealand - he's living in Australia. My prayer is that he would be safe, also settle down and get married.

I PRAY FOR MY SON WHO DOES NOT LIVE HERE IN NEW ZEALAND WITH ME ... MY PRAYER IS THAT HE WOULD BE SAFE...

OUR STORIES

If I were a journalist for one day I would write about how good and how supportive my community is. In good and bad times, we come together and support each other through all kinds of situations.

I would like to say to the people of Aotearoa NZ that it is full of multicultural peoples and I am so pleased to know them and very happy to live here.



I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO THE PEOPLE OF AOTEAROA NZ THAT IT IS FULL OF MULTICULTURAL PEOPLES AND I AM SO PLEASED TO KNOW THEM AND VERY HAPPY TO LIVE HERE.



What does your name mean?

Lourdes means kind-hearted, patient, and a good friend to be with. My mother named me after the Lady of Lourdes because she was a devout Catholic.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

My mother died of cancer and so did my sister. I have one sister who lives in UK who I believe has cancer too. I have a great relationship with my brothers and sisters who spoiled me to bits as the baby of the family! I miss my family so much and felt lonely when I first moved to New Zealand but as I have lived here for ages, got married and have two boys who we adore so much, I became used to the way of living in NZ and call myself Kiwi.

In my younger days, I really wanted to work as Flight Stewardess but my father wasn't keen

on the idea so I worked in a marketing firm instead. The Parish Priest in our community sponsored me to take a postgraduate in Education and I was able to teach in the local Catholic school before I left for New Zealand.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

I would write about the beauty of New Zealand, the quietness of the surroundings, the beach, the trees and eating fish and chips wrapped in an old newspaper. A very common scene in the sports field and the seaside.

About sports...cricket, rugby...that my sons participated in when they were young. Now they play football in one of the parks in Henderson. The parks remind me of my favourite television series "Xena Warrior Princess" filmed in the grassy, sloping hills of Henderson.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

I didn't know where New Zealand was located! I thought my sister would bring me to the USA where all our relatives are now living. I said "Oh the place is too quiet, the music was old and there were no shops



to visit on the weekends". So, my friend who was living in NZ took me to her work place, a bank she was working at, and told me to apply for a job there so that I wouldn't be bored. I thought I've just arrived but I did apply for it and I got the job!

I felt I'd failed the written exam for the job but I scored 100%. My employer, she handed me the instruction manual on how to operate a computer and told me to learn the manual for a week, and after a week, I was on the counter.

I was so surprised when my officemates told me I'd served the Prime Minister of New Zealand, David Lange, at my counter. I said "it couldn't be possible, a Prime Minister!" In our country, the President does not go to the bank and cash a check, because he might be killed. I found it weird.

What is your relationship with Māori or the Treaty of Waitangi?

The Philippines was colonised by Spain for 400 years and it was my relations who suffered and some were slaughtered. As a result of colonisation emerged national hero Dr José Rizal who was executed by the Spaniard colonial government after the Philippine Revolution broke out. Our constitution was mainly done by the Americans who arrived in the Philippines after the Spaniards, and then the Japanese, and then the Americans again.

Māori and the people of the Philippines have some similarities. Firstly our communications - we both have a similar word that describes a place, a person, or a thing. Family, too, is a strong hold in the community, working together, caring for the elders and young ones is another similar value.

We must respect Māori values and continue to understand Māori values and tradition.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

Acceptance, understanding and respect must be for real. Learn both ways about our diverse cultures and traditions.

MARIA OGAMPO



What does your name mean?

Maria for Mary and Milagrosa (middle name) for Miraculous. Filipinos were colonised by the Spaniards for 400 years who inculcated the Catholic faith in us, thus the religious names of most Filipinos. Most names of women have Maria as their first name.

I LOVE TEACHING AND WOULD REALLY DREAM OF FINISHING OFF MY PHD AND EITHER RUN OR HEAD A SCHOOL.

My mother named me, Maria Consuelo, as she said she almost had a C-section during delivery.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I want a low profile life. I really wish to be of service to others, to do volunteer work, to be a missionary - but I know our finances won't allow that. I love teaching and would really dream of finishing off my PhD and either run or head a school.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

I'd probably want to write about people, their lives (struggles and successes) and their faith.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

With change comes challenges that can be faced with a cheerful spirit. Due to the uncertainty of our move to New Zealand, my Faith in God's

WITH CHANGE COMES CHALLENGES THAT CAN BE FACED WITH A CHEERFUL SPIRIT.



Providence was tested to the utmost! It wasn't easy knowing that my husband's and my work/visa status entailed the future of our 7 children! God led us through and continues to do so.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

New Zealand, we are blessed! Let us take care of our country, be responsible and accountable stewards of this God-given land.

ROSALINDA ZABALA



What does your name mean?

Rosa means flower. Linda means beautiful.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I wish people knew about our culture and how we are with our family and friends. My biggest dreams are that Filipinos will be united and that intrigue amongst us will not exist anymore. Second, to own a house again. Third, to travel and see my family overseas especially my 86 year old aunt, the last sibling of my mum living in the USA. Fourth, maybe be involved in Mission without Borders.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

Probably, I will write about racism.

I WISH PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT OUR CULTURE AND HOW WE ARE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

I did not have any friends or family when I migrated here. It was quite tough and like starting life all over again. My first thought was will I be

IT WAS QUITE TOUGH AND LIKE STARTING LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN. MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS WILL I BE ABLE TO SURVIVE HERE?



able to survive here? Second, will I be able to get a job? My abilities and educational attainment are not being fully recognised here. I ended up working as a caregiver in a rest home, a caregiver for people with disabilities, a cashier in a casino and a phlebotomist in a hospital.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

In everything, have faith in God. Have faith in yourself. If you are not choosy in finding a job, you will be able to get one and will be able to overcome life's adversities.

VINCENT NAIDU



What does your name mean?

Naidu (Nayudu/Naidoo) is a title used by many South Indian Telugu communities. It is my paternal family surname. Vincent is my Catholic baptism name. Satyanand (middle name) means pursuit of truth, righteousness and justice.

I have multiple identities and consequently feel enriched.

Tell us something you wish people knew about you?

I contribute to social justice for a better, fair and just society. Empower people and my family members to make informed decisions for self and public good. I want to leave a benevolent legacy.

BE COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT ABOUT YOUR SKIN, HERITAGE, IDENTITIES AND ROLES.

If you were a journalist for a day and could write something about your community, what would you write?

Be comfortable and confident about your "skin", heritage, identities and roles. Make a constructive contribution towards wider society. Be more open, honest and transparent to discuss and address social issues.

OUR STORIES

Can you tell us about some of your thoughts and experiences of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand?

I came to NZ in February 1971 from Fiji for tertiary study. In 1971, NZ was a mono-cultural, closed and one-dimensional society dependent on

THE LEGACY OF A MORE FAIR, DIVERSE, AND BETTER SOCIETY FOR MY CHILDREN IS IMPORTANT TO ME.



the UK and strongly allied to the western world and alliances. It had white immigration policy and I witnessed the Dawn Raids, exploitation of migrant and seasonal workers and racism and prejudice. I have been privy and party to the metamorphosis of NZ becoming a more diverse, open, independent, bicultural nation and multicultural society with a more progressive social, political and economic agenda. It is work in progress. The legacy of a more fair, diverse, and better society for my children is important to me.

What would you like to say to the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand?

Be open. Reach out and learn - take a multidimensional view of your life and the world. Network, connect and enjoy the interactions. Contribute, share skills, knowledge, resources and find satisfaction in the art of giving. Feel confident and have humility.



I live in Ranui with my family, I have five adult children - two daughters and three sons, and I am from Myanmar. My full name is Vung Go Niang and my grandfather was a hunter and would bring home much food. My name refers to the abundance and prosperity.

Since joining the WISE Women Collective with Sasi I am learning English, meeting new people and making friends. The New Zealand Government is very good.

I think it's important to keep learning and growing. Step-by-step, I'm doing this. This is my dream.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP LEARNING AND GROWING. STEP-BY-STEP, IM DOING THIS. THIS IS MY DREAM.

OUR STORIES

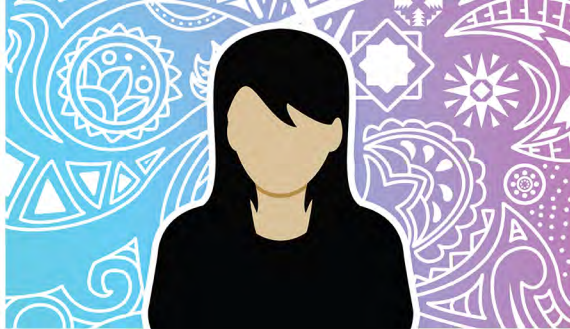
IF SOMEONE DOES NOT HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENCE, SOMEONE WHO DOES HAVE ONE, WILL SUPPORT BY OFFERING TO TEACH OR OFFER TRANSPORTATION. MY COMMUNITY IS SAFE, I FEEL SAFE.



When I first arrived in New Zealand the government and all the people were very helpful. My children had help with getting into school and the government helped support me applying to WINZ, accommodation and knowing where all the schools were in my community. My friend told me about the WISE Women Collective and now I am not alone, I have friends.

If I were journalist for the day I would write about my Zo community, mixed ethnic groups, some Myanmar, some Chinese all living together in Ranui. I would write about how supportive we all are of each other and if I cannot understand what people are saying in my community we slow our language down so we try and help in that way. If someone does not have a driver's license, someone who does have one will support by offering to teach or offer transportation. My community is safe, I feel safe.

XINLI ZHU



My name is Xinli Zhu - it means beautiful and strong, my granddad named me. I want to share with you my journey since I came to New Zealand.

In March 2003, I arrived in New Zealand as an international student when I was 18 years old. My friend came to pick me up because she came earlier than me, so I am quite lucky to have everything already settled before I came.

I lived in a homestay in Te Atatu South for a year where I studied at a language school in Henderson. At that time there were so many international students in the language school, so I made lots of friends. My home stay host was a really nice lady. She was a widow with one dog. She was the first kiwi who I met and despite stories around many negative things related to a homestay (not being given enough food or restricted shower time etc.)

she treated me as family. She prepared sandwiches for me every day. She tried really hard to cook rice for me as well, and we had ice cream for dessert every night!

In 2004, I moved to Napier to study. I lived in this beautiful small town until my studies finished. Life was quite simple and comfortable - between library to home and workplace. I had a good relationship with my landlady, who invited me to her house and showed me her sewing.

In 2006, I moved back to Auckland and worked in Dominos Pizza for 3 years, and then I got my Permanent Residency. From Counter to Assistant Manager, I then became the Store Manager, I learned a lot. I worked with some teenagers and we talked about our cultures and thoughts as well, it was quite

OUR STORIES

interesting. Until now we still have a connection on Facebook. One of my previous co-workers, got married to one of the staff and they had a baby girl. Our boss helped me to prepare all the paperwork for my residency application.

In between, I changed jobs a few times, and in 2009, I got married and

I have two kids now. Looking back on the last ten years and more, I really appreciate all the people I've met. New Zealand is a diverse country and people are friendly.

I still remember when I lost my cell phone at Botany Mall - it was returned to me after a few hours, thankfully.



I am very happy that my children can study and live happily here. Also, my parents love their retirement life in New Zealand. They have so many friends and activities to do every week. My mum was not happy during her first year here because she had no friends and couldn't drive and or go shopping by herself. She relied on me, but I needed to go to work 5 days a week.

My dad wanted to change their situation and to see what he can do for the family, and our Chinese community, so he organised the Waitakere Chinese Association with his friends. I am so proud of him. After retirement, he still tries his best to support the community because he knows it's not easy to live here with language barriers, especially when people need to learn everything from the beginning.

The Waitakere Chinese Association was set up more than 2 years ago, and we have so many volunteers to help in different ways. Nearly 500 members have found a place to play and communicate with others, not just "stuck" at home for the rest of their life. I really appreciated government and local community support for all the community groups no matter where you come from.

I am working at MSD so I keep helping more people to live independently and start their life with happiness too.

