



**SUNNY
IM-WANG
KCI
VOLUNTEER**

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How has the coronavirus pandemic affected your life?

The coronavirus pandemic has affected me differently in my personal life and my work life. On a professional level, I feel so grateful to be employed and to be able to continue working. At the same time, it's giving me time to reflect on what I might want to do next in my career. On a personal level, as the pandemic has lasted longer than expected, I started thinking about what it means to be a partner, a parent, and a co-worker during these difficult times. Also, as I thought about what it means to be a member of the community and what I could do for my community, I was inspired to look into volunteering opportunities.

What motivated you to volunteer for the Senior Meal Delivery Program?

A number of years ago, after my mother became sick, I was looking for social services and programs that could be helpful to support my mom. During that time, it occurred to me that there must be other older Koreans who wouldn't know what to do and where to look for support. I had always volunteered at places like homeless shelters, but didn't know much about Korean community organizations. After attending KCI's Chuseok Festival last year, I learned about KCI and saw in their monthly e-newsletters about the Senior Meal Delivery Program. I was looking for a way to help the community during these Covid times, so it seemed like the perfect volunteer opportunity, one that helps seniors and also that fits right into my schedule.

How has your experience been so far volunteering with KCI?

I've gained so much from the volunteering! First of all, I was very impressed with how organized the operations were. The KCI team seemed like they knew what they were doing, especially during these challenging times when taking appropriate safety precautions are so important. It was really reassuring and refreshing to see. As I was doing the deliveries, I loved how so many seniors were so grateful for our help. One particular "halmoni" [grandmother] was so appreciative and didn't want me to leave empty-handed, so she always insisted on giving me a chocolate bar or a small snack. She was expressing "jeong (정)," a Korean word and concept that conveys fondness, caring, heart... She wanted to share her gratitude and connection to me, even if I only saw her once a week. This kind of experience really molds a person, and I wish I could do it more often!

Have you been involved with the Korean community or other Korean organizations before?

No, this is the first time. Growing up, there were few Koreans where I lived. After I had a kid, I felt it was very important for my daughter to have that connection with the community, something I never had when I was growing up. Now that I'm connected, through KCI, to the Korean community in SF, I hope there'll be more opportunities for me to get involved.

Do you see any needs in the Korean community that you feel should be addressed?

I wish there were more opportunities or programs that connect my daughter's generation to the older generation. Especially in Korean culture, respecting elders is very important, and I try to teach that to my daughter. I think young people have a desire to make these connections, but it has to be something fun and meaningful that they're motivated by, and not pushed to do by their parents. Also, I believe that parents like me are looking for things to do together with their kids that's community service-oriented. It would be great if there was more information and easier ways to volunteer.