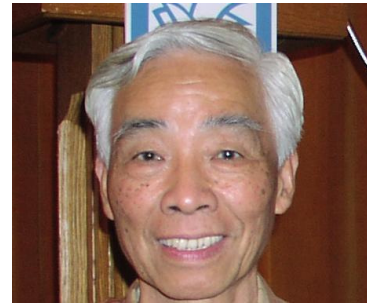


Achieving an American Dream



Jianping "Jimmy" Wu wanted to be a United States citizen more than anything. He was born in Shanghai, China, in 1931. He first came to the United States to visit his children when he was 62 years old and after retirement moved here permanently in 2000.

When he arrived, his limited English skills prevented him from connecting with English speakers around him. But he remained determined to join his children and grandchildren as a citizen and part of the community.

After finding that a classroom program did not meet his needs, Jimmy approached English At Large for a one-to-one English literacy tutor. The flexibility and learner-centered approach of the English At Large model meant that he could meet his tutor near his home and that he would be assured of instruction tailored to his ability level and interests.

English At Large matched him with Gary, a local volunteer who had recently completed the English At Large tutor training workshop. They began meeting weekly in a nearby social hall for two hours at a time.

The match was a success. Gary and Jimmy hit it off. Gary focused their tutoring sessions around Jimmy's ambition to become a citizen, teaching English literacy in the context of American history and government, American culture, and the vocabulary and concepts essential for becoming an informed citizen.

Within the year, Jimmy achieved his goal. It was difficult to know who was more proud—Jimmy or Gary—when Jimmy passed his citizenship interview on his first attempt. Jimmy's family was unable to attend his swearing-in ceremony, but his tutor, Gary, and Gary's wife were there and were pleased to share in this special event. "Watching Jimmy achieve his citizenship was

very moving and more personally satisfying than I could ever have anticipated," said Gary. "My work with him has broadened my own horizons in remarkable and unexpected ways."

After the ceremony, Jimmy hosted Gary and his wife at lunch in a nearby Italian restaurant, which is Jimmy's favorite food. The lunch offered a uniquely American scene: an immigrant from China enjoying an Italian lunch with descendants of Russian, Polish, English, and Romanian immigrants.

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Since then, Jimmy has proudly voted for the first time and supports other members of the Chinese immigrant community as they pursue citizenship.

Jimmy's son summed up Jimmy's feelings when he thanked Gary for being Jimmy's tutor, saying, "You have helped my parents realize their American dream." Jimmy is now learning about baseball as he continues to live his American dream today.