

The Faces of Adult Learners: 25 Years in the Making



Sophia Xu Tao Yu

Sophia Xu Tao Yu came to the Asian American Civic Association's ASCENT program (Accounting Skills, Computers and English Training) as a cashier for a Japanese Restaurant. She had just completed her first English class at AACA. She was ready to take the next step to improve her professional life.

Sophia applied to ASCENT because she had heard that many graduates from this program were getting jobs at different banks. This was very appealing to her because in China she had worked for 15 years as the assistant to the president of the Agricultural Bank of China. She was eager to improve her English, accounting and computer skills so she could try to get her foot in the door working at one of the local banks.

Sophia excelled in the program and obtained a position at State Street Corporation working as a Data Entry Operator. Her supervisors quickly noticed her keen ability with numbers and special attention to detail. After demonstrating her ability over the course of six months, she was promoted to Accounting Associate II. She has been working there for two years now and continues to grow with the company. She is a true immigrant success story!

Age: 38
Immigrated from China in 2005
Adult Education Program:
Asian American Civic Association
Adult Education Coalition:
Chinatown Community Education Partnership

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative. (ALI)

What is ALI?

We are Boston adult basic education providers that receive funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or/and the City of Boston.

What do we do?

We provide services that help adult learners reach their educational and career goals as workers, parents, and community members:

- ◆ **GED preparation**
- ◆ **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**
- ◆ **Adult Basic Education: literacy and numeracy**
- ◆ **Transition to college and job training programs**
- ◆ **Adult Diploma**

These profiles highlight the accomplishments and challenges of just a few of Boston's 6,500+ enrolled adult learners; another 5,500 are waiting to enroll.

Education: Improving Lives and Creating Opportunities!

For more info: Brunir O. Shackleton, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, (617) 918-5244 or brunir.shackleton.jcs@cityofboston.gov



Rachel Li

Rachel came to Boston from China in 2000 with almost no English. Through fellow immigrant co-workers, she learned of the ESOL program at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC). She completed both the BCNC program and the Asian American Civic Association's English-for-employment course. She then advanced to One With One's office skills training in Brighton, through which she landed a position as an office assistant at the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Boston. In early 2009, the Archdiocese promoted her to Operations Assistant.

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Now fluent in English and taking on increasing responsibilities at work, Rachel still makes time to help recent immigrants in the Chinatown community where she first began her life in America. She is a member of a team of BCNC Adult Education students and graduates volunteering their work to develop an alumni network and website. In February 2009 she completed tutor training and began teaching beginning English to three students waitlisted for classes at BCNC.

Clearly aware of the value of education, Rachel now continues to improve her own English through ESOL classes at Bunker Hill Community College. Her eye is on a bachelor's degree in the future, perhaps in management. Her former teachers are in no doubt that, as a manager, she will be able to lead by example.