

**It's More  
THAN JUST  
VOLUNTEERING**



*Phuong and her husband on their wedding*

## SOMETIMES SERVING CHANGES YOU!

**W**hen you grow up in a family where domestic abuse is a regular occurrence, it can become an awful pattern throughout a person's life. Phuong was taught from an early age that the physical and verbal abuse from her stepfather was a normal part of life. This horrible cycle continued when Phuong met her first boyfriend as a young teen and he too grew to become more and more emotionally, physically and sexually abusive. Phuong was too ashamed to tell anyone. *"One of the worst moments took place when out of a jealous rage, my boyfriend tried to hit me with a baseball bat,"* said Phuong.

**PHUONG WANTED TO LEAVE** him but when she tried to move out her boyfriend climbed on the roof and threatened to commit suicide. Feeling guilty and believing she was still in love, she gave him another chance but nothing changed. After many more chances and attempts to leave, Phuong finally moved to California on her own to leave her ex-boyfriend and her past behind.

*"It is so rewarding for me to be able to help women make healthy decisions today as a volunteer at AACI."*

Phuong was able to break the cycle of violence and once in California, she began the process of healing and moving forward. She started seeing a therapist and decided to help other survivors. *"I wanted to make something good out of my bad experiences. I reached out to AACI because I felt like I could make a difference by sharing my story,"* said Phuong.

**PHUONG STARTED VOLUNTEERING** at AACI Asian Women's Home and helped provide training to new volunteers coming into the program. *"It is so rewarding for me to be able to help women make healthy decisions as a volunteer at AACI,"* said Phuong.

Today, Phuong is in a healthy and empowering relationship with a partner who gives her unconditional love and views her as his equal. She recently married him in his native country of Scotland. She also became the first in her family to graduate from college.

### Would you like to volunteer?

Visit [support.aaci.org/volunteer](http://support.aaci.org/volunteer) or contact Katherine Wang at [Katherine.Wang@aaci.org](mailto:Katherine.Wang@aaci.org) or 408-975-2730 ext. 477 for more information.

*\* At AACI we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, client names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.*