

紐約

## 八旬耆老做義工11年 何麗霞「做義工讓我年輕」

©2017年10月11日 22:24 紐約



八旬耆老做義工11年 何麗霞「做義工讓...



何麗霞做義工的工作之一是教耆老們編織的串珠裝飾。

華埠的衣廠退休工人何麗霞今年84歲，但看上去比實際年齡年輕一二十年。問她保持年輕的秘訣，何麗霞笑呵呵的說：「做義工。」這話可不是隨便說說，她已經在紐約探訪護士服務下屬華埠退休居民社區服務（Chinatown NNORC）做義工11年了，服務時數累計達到700小時。「做義工可以保持頭腦靈活，又能幫到別人，所以我每天很開心，一點也不覺得累。」她說。

1933年出生於廣東台山的何麗霞一生經歷了不少坎坷。她一歲時父親就來了美國，六歲時父親因故去世，媽媽和奶奶含辛茹苦帶大她和姐姐。6歲到13歲趕上了八年抗戰，時局不穩，常常連飯都吃不飽。但這些都沒能阻擋何麗霞成長為一個樂觀知足、熱愛生活的人。

### 每星期出糧已經很開心

出國前，何麗霞在電影院擔任放映員，1980年移民來到美國後，進入衣廠工作。衣廠計件付薪，年紀比別人大，手腳比別人慢，何麗霞只能比別人花上更多的時間，常常是早上8點上班，做到晚上12點，一周三四天都是這樣，但她從來不覺得苦。

「在中國吃過苦，在美國就不覺得艱苦了，每個星期都有糧出，我已經很開心了。」她說。

何麗霞在衣廠做到69歲才正式退休，這時候兒孫都已經長大成人，突然閒下來讓忙碌了一輩子的她很不習慣。「我是閒不下來的人，現在讓我做衣廠，我覺得我也還能做。退休以後沒有活動，整天在家裡發呆，人也發胖了。」她說。

2006年紐約探訪護士服務從紐約州老年服務署得到經費啟動華埠退休居民社區服務，何麗霞加入成為會員，最開始只是想把自己收到的英文信拿來請這裡的社工幫著讀，正趕上這裡在招義工，她就一併加入了。「最開始我都不知義工是做什麼的，義工負責人陳姑娘告訴我，就是有活動需要幫忙時就來幫忙，我覺得這個我可以做。」

#### 開設編織課程傳授手藝

如今，何麗霞不僅參加社區服務中心舉辦的英語班、手工興趣班等，還作為義工開設編織課程，把她從小就擅長的編織手藝傳授給耆老們。他們編織的毛衣、襪子、串珠工藝品、項鍊等做工精細。從2012年開始，每年聖誕季節，耆老們都會通過市老人局把自己編織的圍巾、毛衣、手套捐贈給有需要的兒童，深受歡迎。

何麗霞說，開始做義工後，她整個人又恢復了原來的活力。「動起來也減了肥，人更健康了，思想靈活了，脾氣也好了。」她說。「很多人問我為什麼這麼大年紀手指還這麼靈活，答案就是做義工。」

回想自己的一生，何麗霞說她沒有任何後悔和遺憾的事，「我不想賺很多錢，我現在有退休金，雖然錢不多，但我是節省的人，已經夠用了。」如果說有什麼心願，何麗霞說她希望「退休居民社區服務」能夠希望開多興趣班，讓她在做義工的同時學到更多知識。

本報記者榮筱箐紐約報道

### *Translation:*

## **11 Years of Volunteering Made Me Feel Young, Lai Ha Hor**

Lai Ha Hor who is an 84 years old garment factory retiree but looks 10-20 years younger than her actual age. She cheerfully reveals that the secret of being young is volunteering. This is not exaggerating. She has been volunteering for 11 years at Visiting Nurse Service of New York, Chinatown Neighborhood NORC program and Chinatown Community Center. She has contributed totally more than 700 hours during all these years. She said: "Volunteering keeps me young and I can help people at the same time. I am very happy and not feeling tired at all."

Lai Ha Hor, was born in 1933 in Toishan, Guangdong province of China and her life was not easy. Her father came to U.S. when she was one year old. He passed away when she was only six years old. Her mother and grandmother worked very hard to raise her and her sister. Lai Ha Hor experienced wars from the age 6 to 13 in China. At that time, the country was not stable and life was so hard that there were not even enough food. Although there were a lot of hardships, they didn't stop Hor, Lai Ha to be an optimistic and grateful to enjoy her life.

### **Her Happiness comes from Weekly Paycheck**

Lai Ha Hor worked in a theater in China before she came to U.S. After she immigrated to U.S. in 1980, she worked in a garment factory. She was paid by the amount of pieces of clothes working in garment factory. She had to work harder than other workers because she was slower than others due to her age. There were 3 to 4 days a week that she needed to work overtime from 8 A.M. to 12 A.M, but she never had the bitter feeling towards her life.

She said: "Comparing to the struggles in China, I didn't feel life was hard in U.S., because at least I had stable income weekly. I was happy about that."

Lai Ha Hor had been working in garment factory until she retired at 69 years old. At that time, all her children and grandchildren had grown up. She was not used to her retirement life since she was busy working all her life. "I'm kind of person who doesn't like spare time. If you asked me to work in garment factory now, I think I could still handle it. After retirement, I didn't have any activities. I stayed home all day, and gained some weight," she said.

In 2006, the VNSNY Chinatown Neighborhood NORC was funded by New York State Office for the Aging. Lai Ha Hor joined as the member. At the beginning, she only went to Chinatown NNORC for social service offered by the social workers. Once she found out about the Chinatown NNORC was recruiting for volunteers, she signed up immediately. "At the beginning, I didn't know what volunteering was about. But after Ms. Chan, Chinatown NNORC staff explained to me about the volunteer duties. I think I can do it."

### **Teaching Knitting and Beading Class**

Now, Lai Ha Hor, is not only a student in Chinatown NNORC English and handicraft classes, she also teaches other seniors knitting in Chinatown Community Center as a volunteer. She likes knitting and she hopes to pass on all her skills to others. The handicrafts they made are all very beautiful and detailed. VNSNY Chinatown NNORC collaborated with Department for the Aging Grandparent Resources Center for their Holiday Drive since 2012. Lai Ha and other seniors actively participated in the knitting project. They donated their hand-knitted scarfs, sweaters, gloves, necklace, bracelets to the children and other grandparents in need. They received highly positive feedbacks.

Lai Ha Hor feels young and full of energy again after becoming a volunteer, she stated "I'm now more flexible, active, and healthy with good tempers".

"Many people asked me why my hands are still flexible at this age. My answer is 'being a volunteer'". Lai Ha Hor stated that I am living my life to the fullest and have no regret. "I don't need to earn a lot of money. Even though my social security is not a large amount, but it's already enough for me to live happily."

For her wish, she stated she wishes there are more classes and workshops in VNSNY Chinatown NNORC, so that she can learn more while being a volunteer at the same time.