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## Service Learning: Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly

When I signed up for Chinese 3101 in the Fall of 2019, I had no idea there was a Service-Learning requirement involved. I already had a really busy schedule and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to keep up with the schoolwork. I was very lucky to find a Service-Learning site less than seven minutes from Northeastern University's campus through Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly. At first, I was really nervous because I am usually great with children, but I don't spend a lot of time around the elderly. I felt out of my comfort zone in English, let alone the purpose for the class was to use my Chinese language skills to converse with non-native English speakers.

It ended up being a really fulfilling experience for me to spend time engaging with members of the community. The elderly Chinese ladies put on a Tai Chi show, I taught them to play Bingo, and they showed my pictures of their grandchildren and told me about their families and how many of them immigrated from China to the United States. Being around these elderly people, knowing I was helping them made me really happy and service-learning became a highlight of my week. On top of that they were also engaging with me and making me laugh and think about my own life. So as much as I was helping them, they were helping me as well.

It was no surprise to me in the Spring of 2020 that I would have Service-Learning. I was very happy to hear Nancy was my TA, I wanted to rejoin the Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly program and she made that possible. While I was at a different location, I still enjoyed my experience with the older ladies. Although few spoke mandarin and none spoke English, I

actually learned to count to 100 in Cantonese, that way I could help facilitate Bingo (a favorite throughout the program).

When I return to Boston, hopefully in the Fall, I hope to rejoin Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, despite not being required of the Chinese class I will be taking. I enjoy the work I am able to do with the elderly folk and I look forward to continuing that work throughout my time at Northeastern. My year with Little Brothers Friends of the elderly is one I will not forget, and I am looking forward to continuing my relationship with the program for years to come.