

A Diverse Match

Andrei Studenov and Yi-Chun Chen

(Written by Po-Yi Liu)



After living in several places, Andrei Studenov and Yi-Chun Chen decided to make Vancouver, British Columbia, their new home in 2002 with their two sons, Yi-An (8 years old) and Yi-Van (5 years old). The family is a very multi-cultural bunch. Andrei, who is half Vietnamese and Russian, has lived in the United States and now in Canada, and as a result, grew to have a unique set of values. Yi-Chun, on the other hand, is originally from Taipei, Taiwan.

Andrei and Yi-Chun registered with Volunteer Grandparents after finding out about it three years ago in 2007. At the time, the couple was working very diligently to help Yi-Chun's father migrate and settle in Canada from Taiwan. Andrei's own parents, on the other hand, are still living in Moscow, Russia. Like most migrating families, the family found themselves lacking extended family support as they moved from place to place. So when they learned about Volunteer Grandparents, they asked themselves, "*Is it worth it?*"

After registering, they waited under the program for quite some time because the number of prospective volunteer families exceeded the number of prospective volunteer grandparents. They were beginning to worry that their sons might not get matched up, but fortunately, the organization found a volunteer grandma for them. Her

name is Diana. So far, it has been a great match, Diana has been a wonderful grandma since then. She takes Yi-An and Yi-Van swimming every week and brings them to different places sometimes. They even had a sleepover in the past too. The family is very thankful to Diana for the gift she brings.

On the outside, it appears as though only the children are benefiting and growing from the intergenerational connection. However, even the parents themselves found the relationship very helpful and refreshing. Yi-Chun herself holds two jobs with one full-time. As Andrei says, having a 'grandma' around to help take care of his two boys allowed him some flexibility to pursue other goals. Especially in Chinese culture, it is very common for grandparents to assist parents with child-care. It is their way of expressing their love. In that sense, the gifts that Grandma Diana bring to the family meet an important intergenerational value that has been formed by another cultural heritage. Grandma Diana becomes another person to whom Yi-An and Yi-Van can turn.

Partial preview. For information on how to purchase a copy of *Growing from the Roots* please contact Volunteer Grandparents. 604-736-8271.