

# GREAT IMMIGRANTS

# GREAT AMERICANS

FEATURING BETTY KWAN CHINN



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WHEN I SEE PEOPLE BAREFOOT, I ALWAYS GIVE THEM SOCKS AND SHOES.



IF I DON'T, MY FOOT HURTS...

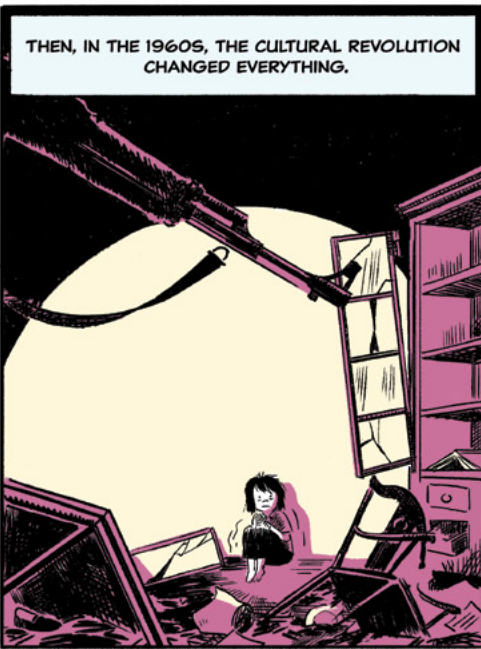
...MY FOOT IS COLD.



LIKE WHEN I SEE THEM HUNGRY, I FEEL HUNGRY AND THAT'S WHY I FEED THEM.



MY MOTHER WAS AN OB DOCTOR IN CHINA. SHE TOOK IN RUNAWAYS AND ABUSED YOUNG WOMEN AND LET THEM LIVE IN OUR HOUSE, AND SHE CRUSADED AGAINST FOOT-BINDING.



THEN, IN THE 1960S, THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION CHANGED EVERYTHING.



WE WERE THROWN OUT OF OUR HOUSE. THE RED GUARDS BROUGHT ME TO A GARBAGE DUMP. I LIVED BAREFOOT AND WORE ONLY ONE LAYER OF CLOTHING ALL YEAR ROUND FOR FOUR YEARS...



...UNTIL I ESCAPED, AND SWAM ACROSS THE BAY FROM CHINA TO HONG KONG AND FLEW TO THE U.S. TO STAY WITH MY SISTER.

"SAIL ON SILVER GIRL, SAIL ON BY, YOUR TIME HAS COME TO SHINE, ALL YOUR DREAMS ARE ON THEIR WAY, SEE HOW THEY SHINE. OH, IF YOU NEED A FRIEND I'M SAILING RIGHT BEHIND"



THE BIGGEST MEMORY FOR ME IS COMING OUT OF THE AIRCRAFT AND HEARING THE SONG "BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER."



I WAS ALWAYS BAREFOOT IN CHINA, BUT MR. ROGERS TAUGHT ME HOW TO PUT SHOES ON MY FEET.



YEARS LATER, I GOT MARRIED, AND WORKED AT A SCHOOL IN EUREKA, CALIFORNIA.



MY SON'S FRIEND, A GIRL IN THE FIRST GRADE, KEPT ASKING MY SON FOR FOOD.



I FOUND OUT SHE AND HER FAMILY LIVED IN A CAR, SO I FED THEM.

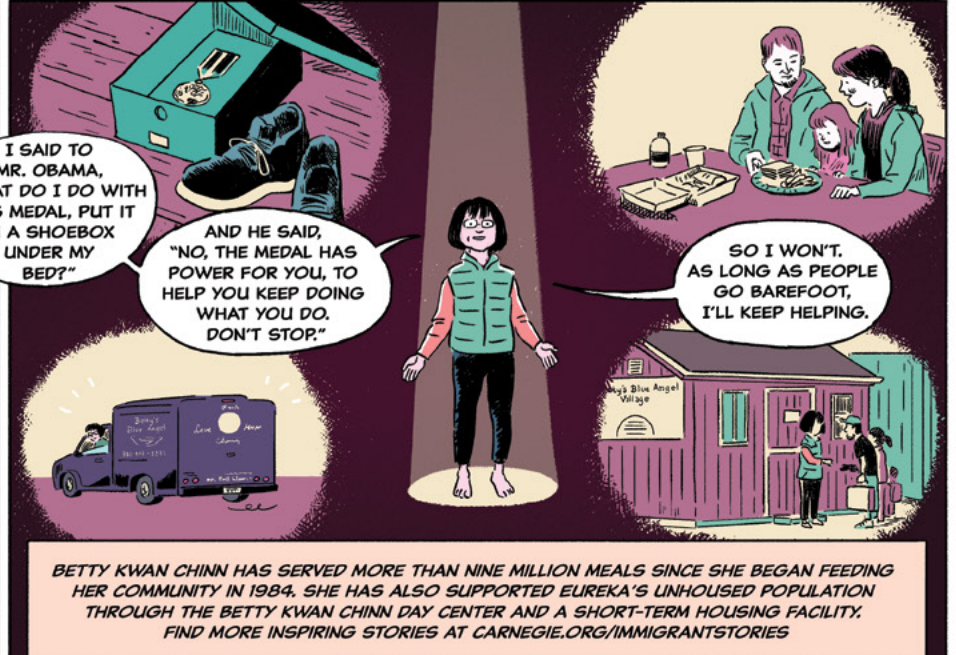


THEN I FOUND A WHOLE BUNCH OF VETERANS LIVING ON THE STREET, AND I FED THEM TOO. I WAS COOKING ALL THE TIME!\*



MY NEIGHBOR CALLED PRESIDENT OBAMA AND TOLD HIM ABOUT WHAT I WAS DOING HERE IN EUREKA.

SO HE GAVE ME THE PRESIDENTIAL CITIZENS MEDAL.



I SAID TO MR. OBAMA, "WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS MEDAL, PUT IT IN A SHOEBOX UNDER MY BED?" AND HE SAID, "NO, THE MEDAL HAS POWER FOR YOU, TO HELP YOU KEEP DOING WHAT YOU DO. DON'T STOP."

SO I WON'T. AS LONG AS PEOPLE GO BAREFOOT, I'LL KEEP HELPING.

BETTY KWAN CHINN HAS SERVED MORE THAN NINE MILLION MEALS SINCE SHE BEGAN FEEDING HER COMMUNITY IN 1984. SHE HAS ALSO SUPPORTED EUREKA'S UNHOUSED POPULATION THROUGH THE BETTY KWAN CHINN DAY CENTER AND A SHORT-TERM HOUSING FACILITY. FIND MORE INSPIRING STORIES AT [CARNegie.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES](http://CARNegie.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES)

\*23.3% OF HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WORKERS ARE IMMIGRANT WOMEN. SOURCE: A SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, JUNE 2023