

## Resiliency Project

Thanh Ta Heng

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What are you currently doing? What is your home life like?

a. I am a first generation Vietnamese American Firefighter for the City of San Jose. I currently live with my fiancé in San Jose, in our own house which is close to both our immediate families. Home life is hectic due to both our jobs, but we find time to spend time with our family which takes priority in our home life.

2. What does resilience mean to you?

Resilience means the ability to survive and succeed in whatever you do. It plays a huge role in my life as it is always at the forefront of my mind at work as well as at home.

3. In your definition of resilience, can you remember a time that you were resilient?)

I would say resilience played a big part in obtaining my career as a professional firefighter. It took me 7 years to get hired on a big city department in which I spent years preparing myself, to be an attractive candidate for the city of San Jose. I worked on getting a college education, participated in high school sports, participated in numerous community events and programs, worked many years on an ambulance as an EMT and paramedic, worked on my Vietnamese and Spanish language skills, worked on state level fire departments, and preparing myself for the physicality of the job. I think the most important thing to note out of all these obstacles was the unrelenting urge to improve, change and accept the changes and obstacles that arise during this process.

4. Was there anyone or anything in particular (religion, community, government aid) that helped you get through this tough time?

Family, friends and my significant other were such a great support system that helped me through my journey. They continued to give me a reason to keep pushing and not give up.

5. What kept motivated to get through this challenging time?

a. I am not sure why I am a motivated person. When I was little, someone told me I was meant for great things and for some reason I kept that to heart ever since. I don't remember who told me that but it stuck with me. Throughout my journey, different things would keep me motivated,

whether that be to support family, set an example, pure ego, or the idea that there is nothing better to do with your life, so might as well try and do your best with everything you do.