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“I was born in Everett, Washington, and raised near Bend, Oregon. In 1966, I joined the army and trained as a Green Beret. In 1969, I graduated from engineering officer candidate school.

I served 18 months in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971 as an intelligence officer. I was working 12 to 14-hour days, six days a week. At the Combined Intel Center, my job was to assemble and send intelligence reports to the White House and escort visiting government analysts from the Secretary of State (Henry Kissinger’s office). Additionally, having been trained to speak and read Vietnamese, I commanded a department of Vietnamese who translated captured documents.

“After several months, my commander called me in and said, ‘Since you have an extra day, you need more work. You’re now the president of our civic action project, known as the Hoi Duc Anh orphanage in Saigon.’” The orphanage cared for 550 children from day old to 17 years of age. When the boys reached 13, they were moved to a facility in the Cholon suburb of Saigon. While the army supported indigenous civic action efforts, there was never enough financial support.

“I’ve always had an entrepreneurial spirit and saw opportunities to add additional revenue to the orphanage budget: a beauty shop, barber shop, and tailor shop on the sidewalk adjoining a very busy street. Additionally, I noticed an area on the orphanage grounds of the old French plantation that was completely walled in. I brought in engineers to open it up and discovered an intact old bakery which was cleaned up and began producing 5000 loaves of bread weekly, thus creating another source of money, new jobs, and vocational training for the older kids. Another opportunity also arose on a vacant lot adjoining our suburban facility where the 13 to 17-year-old boys were housed. At this site, we constructed a floor tile factory. This was the largest civic action program in Vietnam. The opening ceremony was celebrated with the attendance of the local TV station, the mayor of Saigon, and several generals and officers from MACV and the American Embassy. This was a very memorable experience helping others to help themselves.

**“IF YOU’RE NOT MAKING SOMEONE ELSE’S LIFE BETTER, THEN YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME. YOUR LIFE WILL BECOME BETTER BY MAKING OTHER LIVES BETTER.” *WILL SMITH***

“In 1990, I retired from the active and reserve army. In 2017, I also retired from my civilian career as a real estate appraiser. After two years into my civilian retirement, I began writing my memoir to preserve and share my family's history with our children and grandchildren. Upon completion, I realized it was time to do something worthwhile for others. My wife provided a contact name for Community Partners and Caring. I called and went for an interview. I have now been a volunteer since 2021, and I drive up to six clients per day, taking them to medical appointments, shopping, and volunteering in community outreach programs.

“I was recently honored by Community Partners in Caring with the Presidential Award for the most volunteer hours (600) and miles driven (7500) in 2023. I enjoy meeting and conversing with seniors and learning about their life, family, skills, and interests. Loneliness and isolation are huge mental health issues, especially for seniors and I feel fortunate that I am healthy enough at age 78 to be able to help them and to be a listening ear. There is a tremendous amount of satisfaction in helping them move through this life with fewer worries and concerns.

“In addition to providing transportation, many have no family and need help with picking up their prescriptions, taking out the garbage, and just making sure they are safe. I also make “courtesy calls”’ just to say hi, how are you doing? And do you need anything?’

On a recent assignment, my “client” mentioned that she thought she saw water on her kitchen floor and asked if I could check for a leak. She has mobility issues and poor eyesight. When I looked under the sink, I found a leak and spotted black mold. I reported this to the organization, and another volunteer was sent there the next day to fix the leak and work on getting rid of the black mold.

**“NO ONE IS USELESS IN THIS WORLD WHO LIGHTENS THE BURDENS OF ANOTHER.” *CHARLES DICKENS***