



## SALLY RICHMOND

72 years old, babysitter, school teacher, community organizer  
from Manila, Philippines  
living in the US since 1991

### **"My Heart is for the Community!": Sally's Story**

***"I have great love for the community. My heart is for them. I developed this love through the examples of my parents, especially my father, who really cared for other people, especially those who are in need."***

Sally Richmond carries her love for the community wherever she goes. Growing up in a household in the Philippines, she witnessed the values exemplified by her parents, nurturing her ability to understand what compassion and empathy for others mean. These are the values that guide her as she later on worked as an organizer for the Filipino community in Chicago.

If we look at her life in the Philippines, it was a test of perseverance as she describes it. To finish her college, she struggled to work for her university so she could pay her school fees while making time to focus on her studies. After graduation, she landed jobs at different business companies. By then, she was able to support her family. After some time, she felt she had a different purpose somewhere else. And so she tried to apply for a job with World Vision in her desire to be closer to community development work. She happily worked with them for almost 14 years, from working as a typist clerk to becoming one of their organizational officers. Her work exposed her to more social and economic realities confronting the Filipino society. ***"That's where I learned about community organizing. I got to see the disparity between the rich and the poor. We would visit remote communities and tribal areas, and then I saw how these communities were in great need."***

In 1991, she moved to the US, after being petitioned by her mother. She had preferred to stay in the Philippines, but she could not refuse the plea of her mother who needed her support. She worked as a babysitter for 16 long years in order to earn a living in this new country. Later on, she also worked in a Montessori for almost five years as a school teacher for young kids. But as her heart has always pulled her towards community organizing work, she started mobilizing community members in Chicago through AFIRE. ***"I enjoyed organizing meetings and interacting with community members in order to raise some awareness. We would go to churches, restaurants, houses, or bus terminals in order to distribute flyers and invite people to our meetings. A lot of our community members are not aware of the services and resources that they can avail, that's why it is important for us to reach out to them."***

While outreach is an effective way of reaching people, she also experienced the many challenges it presents. ***"It is not easy to do outreach with the Filipino community. It takes***



***sustained connection to earn people's trust. And when you've earned their trust, you also need to ensure that you nurture the relationship in a way that is genuine and mutually beneficial."***

She also focused on organizing domestic workers. Having worked for several years as babysitter, she had seen the many issues that domestic workers face and the different ways they are being treated in private homes and care facilities. ***"Domestic work is not regulated. Domestic workers are only strategizing on their own to survive. There were no policies on minimum wage. You will have to negotiate, and if you do not have the confidence and capacity to do so, you lose. Also, if you do not know how to negotiate, you would end up not having clear job description, and you are prone of being required to do other jobs that are not supposed to be within the scope of your work. When you are hired for babysitting, you are supposed to be babysitting only, and not do other household chores unrelated to babysitting. This is why a clear job description is necessary."***

Being one of those who actively pushed for the passage of the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, she hopes that the community members learn to value the importance of collective awareness. ***"My hope is for us to develop collective awareness. We hope that we are able to learn more about our rights, so that we also are able to assert them. For us to succeed, we need to learn how to build the community and to expand our network. Through this community or network, we will feel supported."***

Read more about Sally's story:

<https://www.afirechicago.org/single-post/2017/06/12/Oral-History-Series-Sally>