Xiaoyi Yi Li was born in the province of Guangdong in China. Her father was a teacher and the inspiration for Xiaoyi Yi to become a teacher as well. Growing up, she always enjoyed school and started learning English in middle school. She was a top student and received numerous academic awards. Xiaoyi Yi became an elementary school teacher and taught in China for six years, then resigned to emigrate to the United States in 1999.

She had met her husband when they were in China, but he and his family had also emigrated to the United States and they were married in California. Xiaoyi Yi was anxious to continue her education in America. She recalls arriving in California on a Friday, going to an amusement park that weekend, and registering for ESL classes at the Rosemead Center on Monday. She was put on wait list, so she decided to enroll in evening classes at Rosemead High School where she was placed in ESL Level 1 (Beginning Low). She was later called by the Rosemead Center where she was reevaluated and placed into Connie Villaruel’s Intermediate-Low class in the morning and Carmen Garcia’s ESL Level 3 class in the afternoon. Xiaoyi Yi finished all levels of ESL, completing the program in 2001.

Xiaoyi Yi’s next step was the High School Independent Studies Program which she completed in 2003. At the same time, she was working on her high school diploma, Xiaoyi Yi was taking classes at Pasadena City College where she obtained both an Associates of Arts and Associates of Science degrees with a major in Applied and Liberal Arts Studies.

In 2001 Xiaoyi Yi was hired as a part- time Adult Education Assistant. After learning additional skills in the workplace, she moved to the ESL Resource Office where she assisted in registering and giving placement tests to students, scanning CASAS tests and assisting the Resource teacher with a variety of projects. During this time, Xiaoyi Yi had two children and like so many adult students, balanced family, home and work. In 2006 she became an election volunteer inspector for Los Angeles County. In 2015, she was hired as a Para Educator for the ESL Department where she helps students in the Beginning Literacy class. She gives educational support to students and prepares teaching materials for teachers.

Xiaoyi Yi is a lifelong learner who continues taking classes at El Monte- Rosemead Adult School and is certified in several CTE pathways, including Accounting Fundamentals, computer certifications at the expert level, and is currently in the Administrative Assistant pathway.

What impresses Xiaoyi Yi most about adult education is the dedication of the students, especially the effort the older adults make to come to school every day, and how happy students are to be there. Xiaoyi Yi is very happy to help students with all of their needs and truly enjoys giving them the same kind of encouragement her teachers had always given her.

As part of her commitment to adult education, Xiaoyi Yi became of member of CCAE. Whenever there is an event or fundraiser, she is there to help translate for the ESL Beginning Low students and helps them access resources to pay for books, public transportation or get medical help.

Now that Xiaoyi Yi’s children are older, her goal is to work full-time at a school in either an academic or clerical capacity. She is truly a role model and an inspiration to adult education students and staff. She has proven what can be accomplished when you are a lifelong learner.