

# Interview with Dr. Jason Zeng

OLLIE TREE FOUNDATION FOUNDER

Dr. Guangbin (Jason) Zeng was born in the Hubei province of China. After graduating in 1985, he specialized in internal medicine and practiced in China for about 8 years. He then immigrated to the US where he did research for a pharmaceutical company for 3 years. Then, he went back to school to do residency training to become a certified family physician from Duke University and has been practicing in North Carolina since the year 2000.

Dr. Zeng had immigrated to the US because "at that time, it was the fashion. Everyone was very poor. I brought my \$50 on the airplane and when they sent me to a hotel, I told them 'I can't pay you guys!'"



*I asked Dr. Zeng if it was difficult to balance his work life and personal life.*

He told me that it was very difficult. He explained to me that not only do you take care of patients, there is also a business aspect of medicine. And balancing between work and family is very challenging. Dr. Zeng says, "You have to juggle back and forth and back and forth. You have a family and you have parents you have to take care of and you have children you have to take care of. You're sandwiched!"

But that is not to say that Dr. Zeng does not enjoy what he does. He shared with me a story of how a patient of his 20 years ago came to visit him.



*"Every time you feel disappointed or so burned out, something comes out again to keep you moving".*

*Being interested in the medical field myself, I asked Dr. Zeng if he had any advice to share with people wanting to pursue a career in medicine.*

Dr. Zeng told me that he highly recommends young people to go to the medical field. He finds it unfortunate that so much of the younger generation is not interested in medicine. To him, there are 3 things required to pursue medicine: being willing to sacrifice, having a strong will to serve people, and having determination.

*"When people ask if I were to do it again, would I study medicine and I say yes. You have good income and at the same time, you can serve people".*

*I had heard that Dr. Zeng does medical missions and I wanted to learn more about them.*

Dr. Zeng started Ollie Tree Foundation to help the Chinese community in Charlotte, North Carolina. Where he serves, there aren't too many Chinese-speaking physicians so it is difficult for some Chinese people to get medical care.

For 8 years now, Ollie Tree Foundation has hosted free medical events for those in need. They provide physical exams and vaccine shots; check blood pressure, sugar levels, and cholesterol; and give free medical advice.

In a 2023 Free Clinic, the number of people served exceeded 200, a new record since the start of the free clinics.



## Interview with Dr. Guangbin Zeng - By Maggie Kuang



When I asked Dr. Zeng what the most fulfilling part of these missions are, he tells me, "You feel your life has value. You feel like you have a purpose and you see people that have been served and taken care of. People appreciate you."

Dr. Zeng tells me of a story of a man who had a pain on his stomach. For 6 months, he couldn't do anything because although he went to the ER, he couldn't describe the problem to them. After going to one of the free medical clinics, he found out he had metastasized cancer. But now, the man is doing well because of Dr. Zeng's help.

Dr. Zeng explains to me that there are always stories similar to the one he told me. "There are so many people that went to the ER and saw different doctors and because of the culture differences and language barrier, they could not get the story right and they missed so many opportunities and wasted so much money because no one understands them so they just get lost. It's very common and that's the reason we started the free medical event."



*I was curious if Ollie Tree Foundation was difficult to start considering they aren't backed by a huge company.*

Dr. Zeng said that it was very hard to get started. When Ollie Tree Foundation first started in the Charlotte area of North Carolina, there were only 10 medical providers. Now, Walgreens and CVS are joining them and they are continuing to expand.

He then shared with me some advice. "I used to think I had to be perfect to do something. Now, I changed my strategy... If there is something you wanna do, go do it now. There's no perfect timing."

*Knowing that Ollie Tree Foundation is still growing, I asked Dr. Zeng what he has in store for the future of Ollie Tree Foundation.*

Dr. Zeng tells me that the goal of Ollie Tree Foundation is to serve people. He says, "We just do our best to do whatever we can do."

He also believes that ANACP has been very helpful for Ollie Tree Foundation. For example, if there is a patient who needs to see a doctor that Ollie Tree Foundation doesn't have, they can call ANACP to provide care for that patient. In doing so, they have expanded their reach and can help many more patients in this way.

Dr. Zeng also hopes to expand outside of the Chinese community and help other minority groups. They have a community from India and Southeast Asia joining them.

*To wrap up our interview, I asked Dr. Zeng if he had any takeaways from this experience.*

Dr. Zeng tells me, "My advice would be to do what you love to do, serve the people, and at the same time, balance everything out and I think you'll be ok."

*About the Author:  
Maggie Kuang*



Maggie is a high school junior at Stevenson High School in Illinois.

She enjoys playing tennis, volunteering, and hanging out with her friends.

She is interested in pursuing a career in medicine.