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22 November 2021

When NDIS participant Zhen Hua Lin arrived in Australia, he had high hopes of an exciting new life in the country he'd long dreamed of.

He would learn English, make new friends and perhaps start his own small business.

But soon after migrating from Southern China, and just as he was adjusting to all the differences he encountered in a new country, Lin faced a change he'd never imagined—losing his vision.

Lin had an allergic reaction, which left him blind. Within a few weeks, his life turned upside down. He moved into a nursing home and was reliant on others.

The sudden and dramatic loss of Lin's eyesight and independence took an enormous toll on his physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Adjusting to his new life and limitations was challenging and distressing. Lin faced the added barrier of being a non-English speaker, making it difficult to find support.

And though a caring church pastor helped Lin move out of the nursing home into an apartment, Lin spent much of the next few years confined to his apartment, cut off from his new community and his dreams.

"I felt extremely devastated," Lin, 50, of Strathfield said. "At the time, I wasn't sure what to do, because it was such a shock. It was a very difficult time for me.

"Before the NDIS, all my plans to start a new life were basically impossible to implement. There were only a few hours' of support a week for the simplest of service."

It has been a long and arduous journey, but Lin is once again living life to the full. He has discovered a new passion for running, and has developed plans for his own small business.

Lin says the turning point in his life was joining the NDIS—with help from NDIS partner in the community (PITC), Settlement Services International (SSI).

"SSI has supported me in so many ways," Lin said. "They helped me find a group to continue running for fitness and encouraged me to attend community activities. This has given me the opportunity to connect with others and share my experiences."

Lin now runs regularly and is enjoying 'giving back' to his community by helping others. On International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) on 3 December, he will receive an Outstanding Achievement Award from SSI for his volunteer work in the community.

“Through the knowledge I gained from SSI, I have been able to assist other Chinese-speaking people with a disability to help get them the support they need,” Lin said.

“I want to share all that I have learned about the NDIS and help others who may not know much about where to get help from. I love to be able to help people.”

As an NDIS partner, SSI delivers local area coordination (LAC) services to people living with disability and helps eligible NDIS participants to navigate the Scheme and connect with community and other government services.

SSI specialises in supporting people with disability from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Bi-lingual staff member Li Hua Chu helped Lin to understand the NDIS and how it could best support him.

“When Lin received his first NDIS plan, he found it difficult to communicate his needs due to his language barriers and lack of personal support,” Li said.

“He knew little about the NDIS and had difficulty explaining his goals and needs in English. As a result, Lin received little support through his plan and could not afford to pay for support workers.”

Lin’s NDIS plan now provides funding for support workers who assist with domestic tasks and help him to access the community. NDIS support workers also accompany Lin on his regular runs.

He also has funding for assistive technology, including a customised mobile phone, microwave, and digital translator.

Lin's story showcases the impact we can all have when we see people for who they are and the things they can do.

To help celebrate the day you can download the IDPwD pack including a social media pack, poster, virtual meeting background and email signature block on the [IDPwD page](#).

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