

Hear from Kristie, the child of refugees from the Vietnam War

Kristie:

I'm the daughter of two Vietnamese refugees that left Vietnam after the war. They set up life in Australia after a short stint in Thailand in a refugee camp.

Interviewer:

What was the journey like for your parents?

Kristie:

The journey for them was unpredictable, I think, to say the least. Leaving Vietnam, they were part of the generation of boat people that fled Vietnam after 75. They didn't have any possessions. They didn't know the language. There was no one familiar or no sense of community. So, they really had to start from the ground up. Genuinely, everything was for our best interest. So, my brother and I went to the best schools. We both finished university without any debt. It was all that investment into making sure that we got the opportunity to have what they never had, which was the chance to learn to develop a career, contribute back to society. They worked hard. They used to take Christmas Day...it was Good Friday, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day that they would have off. So, for me, it's that strong work ethic. It's the resilience and the perseverance, because for them there wasn't a choice to give up.

Interviewer:

What would you say to parents trying to relocate to a new country with their children?

Kristie:

It's never easy to be displaced or, outside of not just your comfort zone, but everything that's familiar. So, I think there's a courage in that that children see. People talk about the values, and things like perseverance and being resilient and not giving up and having a fighting spirit. But you can talk about it, but it's when you see your parents live it day by day that it becomes it. It's a very different experience for you, and you take that into your adult life. So, it's finding the right networks, making an effort to integrate into wherever it is that you're at, because it's not home. It's not going to be close to it. But you can make it home. And I think just understanding that your children will be grateful for it, whether they understand it now or not, they'll know.