

# VOICES OF Energy and Housing Affordability

ENERGY  
EFFICIENCY  
FOR ALL



**NAME:**  
Betrang Nguyen

**OCCUPATION:**  
Elder Care Professional

**RESIDENCE:**  
Hazel Hill Apartments  
Fredericksburg, VA  
147 Apartments

**AFFORDABILITY:**  
100 % Project-Based,  
Section 8

Betrang Nguyen first moved to the United States from Vietnam in 1997. She started her life here in North Dakota, in the midst of winter. It was unexpectedly cold, but she knew her life here in the United States would be different from back home. What she was not prepared for was how differently communities and lifestyles were structured in her new home.

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**“I want time with my kids, nothing else. Because once they’re gone, they don’t have time to come back.”**

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Betrang moved to Stafford, Virginia in 2003 and lived with her husband and four children, three daughters, and one son. She worked as a nail technician, eventually moving to become an elder care professional due to the wear and tear on her hands, but she was not happy with the amount of time she spent away from her kids and felt alone in her community.

When Betrang’s marriage ended in divorce, she and her children had to leave the house, but with nowhere to go, they ended up at a woman and children’s shelter.

In the early stages of her divorce, Betrang took English as a Second Language classes at Hazel Hill, and applied to become a United States citizen.

From spending time at the Hazel Hill community, Betrang knew it was the right place for her and her children. Hazel Hill offers several community development programs, including a tutoring program, which her children desperately needed. As a working single mom and an English learner herself, Betrang could not help her children with their homework. She said she knew it would take a while for her application to be approved, but that she did not want to live anywhere else. After months in the shelter, Betrang and her children were offered a unit at Hazel Hill in June 2017 when she was finally offered an apartment.

Betrang says the Hazel Hill community reminds her of home in Vietnam. There are lots of children, and everyone looks out for each other. Her kids have a lot of friends, are constantly outside playing, and have gotten better grades since attending the tutoring program. Most importantly, she has time to raise her kids, **“Because I don’t have family here, I’m by myself. It makes it hard to work full time...my full-time job is mom, 24 hours a day.”**

Today, Betrang continues her work in elder care while also raising her children. When asked why she stays at Hazel Hill, she replied: **“I stay here because of love. Before, I worked a lot and didn’t have time to take my kids out. Now, I have more time to take them out,”** she continues, **“The house is small, and I am happy. There is nothing better than this.”**