

Hello from California! 2016 has been quite an eventful year for the Wu family. It has reminded us to count our blessings, and appreciate family and friends.

Dachywan has been the stable rock of the family. He still works at Oracle, and still enjoys golf although he has not been able to play as much as before. He still goes to Taiwan to visit his elderly parents, and went there this past July. And in February 2017, Dachywan will bring Conrad and Elizabeth to visit them for 1 week.

Stephen completed his computer training and entered the workforce this summer as a junior software engineer at DoorDash. DoorDash is an internet startup company that gives Stephen a good salary and benefits, enough to reassure his parents that he will be ok on his own financially. In Stephen's words, he has "started [his] adult life." It has been so nice to discuss with him things like how to choose health insurance, and how to save and invest his salary, and his goals. He is also lucky enough to live in Grandpa and Grandma's house, which is about 30 minutes away from his office, so he can save significantly on rent. Fortunately, DoorDash pays him well, and he's pretty thrifty, so he has a good chance to achieve his goal of buying a house in just a few years.

In June, Alyssa graduated from UC Irvine with honors in her double major of Economics and Environmental Studies. Dachywan, Stephen, Conrad, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's parents all attended her graduation. Then we spent the next day at Disneyland. It was very nice to have everyone together in the Happiest Place on Earth! And it was especially nice since only a week later, Alyssa started her master's program in architecture at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. It has been a big change for her. The program is less the lectures/papers/tests kind of program that she's used to, and more hands on and creative, and the adjustment has been difficult. Even so, she has insisted on paying her own tuition and other school expenses!

Conrad completed a difficult 6th grade year, and now is much happier after starting 7th grade. He continues to fence, and has continued to improve while traveling all over the country for competitions. This year, at only the 3rd competition, he did well enough to qualify for the national summer competition in both his own age group (12 y/o) AND the next age group (14 y/o)! And in December, Conrad won his first big tournament medal by placing 6th out of 54 competitors in his age group. The next goal is to convince his coach to allow him to fence in the next age group (16 y/o).

Until September, Elizabeth had been doing the same work at her office and at home that she has been for almost 20 years (time flies!). Then, she was diagnosed with a 6 cm brain tumor that was found on a CT scan (done for increasing headaches and some other symptoms). Two weeks later, she had brain surgery and has been on medical leave since then. (Thank heavens she had previously purchased disability insurance!) Fortunately, the tumor was only a grade 1 benign meningioma, and the recovery from surgery has been very good. Almost all her functions have returned to normal, and she can do all the things that her current duties as housewife require. But she still has hand tremors and mild numbness & weakness that prevent her from going back to work. Hopefully these will also resolve during the planned 6 month leave with the help of occupational therapy.

Despite some challenges, 2016 has been good to the Wu Family. We are truly grateful for all our wonderful friends and for our family who have helped us get through the challenges. (Special thanks to Elizabeth's mom who moved in just before the surgery and took care of all the cooking, cleaning, shopping, EVERYTHING for the next TWO MONTHS+ !) We hope that you have had a wonderful year and that 2017 will bring you much happiness and peace.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
from The Wu Family

