



# PAPHANH SITHAVADY

## IN THE LYME LIGHT AUGUST, 2021



A welcoming community is a rich one, made all the richer by those who are embraced and made to feel like family. More than 40 years ago, Lyme welcomed a Laotian refugee family, whose impact is felt broadly, due to hard work, love, talent for making delicious food, and unending commitment to bettering the community – both here and in Laos. For her selflessness, love of Lyme, partnership in caring, and constant effort to find ways to contribute as much as she can, 2017 Lyme Citizen of the Year, **Paphanh Sithavady is In the Lyme Light.**

The gift for which she is best known is her Thai food (with a Laotian spin). Almost always to raise money for one or another Lyme organization and a school she has helped to build brick-by-brick in Laos, Paphanh cooks for small gatherings and big crowds. She also provides meals to neighbors when she hears about someone who could use it, or just to say thank you to others who help in the community. After several months of frustrating recuperation from two surgeries, Paphanh has almost every day booked with commitments to provide food for an event. And she is looking to do more! While she is the driving force and culinary talent, Paphanh involves others. Her family is central; and she calls on neighbors and friends to help prep, set up, sell, and deliver the food.

Beyond cooking, she has worked lots of lots of jobs for neighbors and local businesses, hand-made thousands of wreaths for holiday sales, and collected bottles and cans for their deposits. And she is extremely grateful for the support – that allows her to support so many others.

“Everyone here looks like my family,” says Paphanh often. They wave on the Common, stop to chat, offer rides and support, eagerly ask about the next Thai food sale; and they help when she needs it. Customers and volunteer helpers who were children years ago re-introduce themselves when they make a special trip for her Massaman curry or pad Thai. Lyme neighbors have bought her food, hired her for many different kinds of jobs, and gathered returnable containers for her. Together, they have helped her to contribute many thousands of dollars for Lyme, and also to raise over \$100,000 for her school in Laos. Though other family members have moved away, she can't imagine living anywhere but Lyme. Like most of us, she values the warmth, safety, and support of this hometown.

Paphanh often reaches out to CommunityCare of Lyme to organize a fundraiser, make a donation to help people in ways she cannot, or problem solve how to get someone particular help they need. She is a cherished partner in caring for the community and really, incredibly generous. At Paphanh's request, we invite you to join her in her efforts and support her when you can. Thank you, Paphanh!

*Our Mission: To build on Lyme's heritage as a warm, welcoming and service-oriented community, by building partnerships, embracing new ideas, and designing systems that improve our individual and collective sense of well-being, as we help transform health and healthcare in our town and beyond.*

