

CCA Member Spotlight

The consulting actuary doesn't sit on the sidelines. We're front and center – the movers and shakers – unafraid of using our powers of intellect and charm to advise and conquer. We're also individuals with countless extraordinary stories to tell. This page will feature the stories of CCA members - who they are and what they do both inside and out of the actuarial world.



Meet CCA Member: **Tanya Sun**

Title: Principal

Employer: Mercer

Location: California

Area of Practice: Health



"The Greatest Risk of All"

Ask Tanya Sun, and she might tell you that there is no greater risk than ignoring the fact that **time** is quietly passing by. It is such a formidable foe, mostly since it so often goes overlooked and is taken for granted – carelessly brushed off as a given. It's too easy to let it happen, and not take notice until it's too late, literally. Yet Tanya possesses the distinct skills of an actuary...and not just any actuary – but a **consulting** actuary with some solid life experience under her belt. So, the ability to provide sound advice about risky business **is** her business. Her advice to us all? Simply put: life is too short. Define success and happiness for yourself then pursue them both aggressively in tandem – don't put the act of living ahead of enjoying your life.

A big chunk of adult life (for most people) is their career. Tanya exemplifies how someone can use the CCA to escape the realm of working just to scrape by and discover a forum in which one can forge relationships, get together, lifting up the profession and each other...and maybe connecting with a few fellow actuaries along the way who are all-in to kick-back and belt out a jam or two at a Karaoke bar in Colorado. Because as Tanya knows better than most: that's just as important.

How did you get into the actuarial profession?

My brother, who passed (*his*) actuarial exams in high school, saying it is one of the best careers out there.

What is your favorite part about being a CCA member?

I love the collaboration between different offices in a similar field. Everyone has a great attitude, is professional, and shares a wealth of knowledge between each other.

Where did you go to school?

University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana.

Who was a professional mentor of yours and how did he or she impact your career?

Dean Kepraios. He is a good friend that I went to college with who is also an actuary at Willis Towers Watson. He has taught me how to handle obstacles in life, persevere in my career, be professional and also have a great sense of humor. It is important to be a good actuary, but you can also be an actuary with charisma.

What is your greatest accomplishment to date – professional or otherwise?

Obtaining my FSA, finishing a half IRONMAN, surviving stage 3C cancer and beating the odds, and bringing up two wonderful girls.

How do you define yourself as a Consulting Actuary (i.e., what does it mean to be a consultant)?

To be able to provide strategic advice and a solution for clients that helps them achieve their common goal. It's not necessarily just about delivering a huge deck, but more about sitting down with the client, talking to them, guiding them through the process, and helping them solve their problems.

How do you define success?

I define success as a way to empower a team to achieve a common goal. I define success as living your life to your fullest in something you want to do and having no remorse.

Can you tell us about your favorite experience working with the CCA?

There are too many to list, but my most recent fun CCA memory was going to Karaoke at the Golden Bee near the Broadmoor with a bunch of fun actuaries.

Is there something about you people would be surprised by if they knew it?

That actuaries actually have feelings.

What is the strangest thing someone has told you they assumed about being an actuary or what it means to be an actuary?

They assumed actuaries take exams similar to that of accountants.

Do you have a favorite book, newspaper, blog, or writer?

Frank J. Fabozzi, *The Handbook of Fixed Income Securities*

What would the title of your autobiography be?

Life Is Too Short

What do you do in your free time?

Yoga, play the piano, snowboard, swim, train for triathlons with my husband and spend time with my family and French bulldog.

What advice do you have for future actuaries or actuaries just getting their careers started?

Be strong, be determined, be courageous. Don't let anything get you down, but don't get ahead at the expense of others!

What do you see in terms of the future of the actuarial profession?

I see the future of the profession always growing. There will always be a need for actuaries as we will always need insurance and the population is aging. The Medicare space especially will continue to grow.

Do you have strong opinions about calculators?

Not particularly, but I prefer the HP calculators.

What is something about you that a lot of people don't know?

That I survived Stage 3C cancer.

What is the most important thing you've learned in the last five years?

That life is too short. We need to do what makes us happy.

If you weren't an actuary, what else might you do for work?

If money did not matter or I had a lot of it, I would be a yoga teacher, start up my own company, or be a motivational speaker.

What does being a member of the CCA mean to you?

Being a member of the CCA gives me a chance to network and come back from the meeting that much more empowered and knowledgeable. I have truly enjoyed and embraced all of my encounters with everyone on the committee and all the speakers.

Thank you, Tanya, for taking the time to share this with us and the actuarial community. We are all better for it!