

House + Joy = Home

Carmen Chu

BEFORE YOU READ: The title is an equation. Read it out loud. What is an equation? Write an equation for what equals home for you.

Strong, Steady, and Happy

Home is a comfortable and happy place for our family. We moved to the United States in 2008. We built a cozy home with our three children. They are reliable and energetic. They gave us energy to help shape our sweet home. Our home is a strong and steady structure, filled with joy.

My husband and I worried about making a new life in the United States, but we wanted a better future for our three children. They worked hard at school. They showed their warm hearts to their teachers and classmates. Our children encouraged us to do our best. They taught us the importance of dedication to our work.

Celebrations in Our Home

Our house is messy, but it's cozy and full of life. We have celebrated our children's birthdays and graduations here. We often have welcoming parties to celebrate special moments with relatives and friends. One of the most special celebrations in our home was our second daughter's wedding. We can't believe she got married and we have a son-in-law. I cried tears of happiness at this



JoJo, Carmen's cat

remarkable time. Each occasion has given us a wonderful time and things to talk about for years to come.

Our children are growing up and getting good jobs. We don't earn much with our low wages. Fortunately, the children help us with the mortgage. They also paid



Carmen's daughter and her husband

for some home improvements, which make daily life more convenient.

Unexpectedly, they also achieved their dream of adopting a cat as our new family member in 2020. Our lovely cat JoJo is our first pet. He is a hilarious and playful boy. He has provided us with pleasant stories to share with our family and friends.

Our home is our secret garden. In it, we planted our joyfulness seeds. We always get an ample harvest.

AFTER YOU READ: Note the extended metaphor in the last paragraph. What does it mean? What are some of the "joyfulness seeds" Carmen and her family "planted"?

Carmen Chu is a lifelong learner of the Alameda Reads Adult Literacy Program in Alameda, California. Since she retired from her job as a library aide in 2025, she has more time to attend adult literacy programs and library events. She loves readings, and she has had three articles published in The Change Agent.

