

Connie Yao & Jim Barabe



by Laura Lewis • Photography by Anna Crabtree

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There is nothing Connie Yao likes more than sharing USANA. And what makes it even more exciting, she says, is having others see the difference in you—whether it's how you look or how you live your life—and then wanting that for themselves as well. "Our lifestyle has completely changed," Connie states, "and people notice that. A lot of friends who knew me before USANA look at me now and say, 'Wow, Connie! You look younger and healthier.' Once I tell them it's because of USANA, it makes them want to be a part of it."

Connie's husband, Jim Barabe, had a completely different reason for joining USANA, however. Jim was an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher when he met Connie through one of his students—her sister.

Shortly before the two of them met, Connie had been introduced to USANA by her pharmacist, Vincent Chan. "He tried to persuade me for some time to join USANA, but I didn't think the products would be good for me. I thought they were for old people," Connie laughs. But eventually, she went back to him and began taking them. "I felt great knowing I was helping maintain my health," she recalls.

Because of that experience, Connie began sharing USANA with everyone—and Jim was no exception. He accepted her invitation to try USANA, but not necessarily because of the products. "I had never even heard of USANA before," he admits. "I was more interested in Connie than anything else, and she's the main reason I decided to join in the beginning. I really liked the way she approached me and spoke to me from her heart about the products and the opportunity. She's very good at establishing relationships—so good that I fell in love with her," he smiles. "We were married in April 1999, and we are very happy today." And it didn't take him long



at all to realize just how precious USANA was either. "I was also curious to find out if the products could really work. Although I had always exercised and had tried to lead a healthy lifestyle, I still had some health concerns. After taking USANA products every day for more than seven years, I feel healthier than ever."



"For me, USANA is a story of love," he continues. "I fell in love with Connie first, and soon after I fell in love with the products, the company, and Dr. Wentz' vision."

In the nearly eight years that Connie and Jim have been in the business, they have experienced more freedom than they even knew existed. "There is a Chinese quote that says if you are successful in network marketing, you can sleep until you wake up. Before we

joined USANA, that wasn't possible for us," Connie says. Jim adds, "We never had the means to take ourselves out to dinner very often. Now it's such a pleasure to be able to invite other people out to lunch or dinner without having to worry about the cost of the bill."

The couple has not only been able to help others through random acts of kindness, they have also shown people how to take care of themselves through the USANA business and products.

Connie and Jim do this by meeting and talking to just about everyone. Connie says, "It's so easy to approach people.

When I go shopping or run errands I find my target, move toward them, and compliment them. Then we just start talking—it's kind of like doing the Cha-Cha," she laughs. "You take a few steps forward, a couple back, and then forward again as you work with people and understand their needs." Connie's mindset is simple: "I know that once people get into USANA, even if they just want to use the products and don't want to do network marketing, I can persuade them to start a business because the marketing plan and the products are both so good. Sharing USANA is just natural for me because my heart is full of USANA."

Jim has noticed how much Connie has grown in this business as well. "Connie has become more forceful and convincing, and a very good listener. When people have objections she listens very patiently." Connie adds, "If you listen very closely and just let them talk, they'll listen to you later. Just give them the opportunity to speak first. Let them get it out of their system. You can find out what their concerns are and what angle to take. I'm the person I am today because of USANA. Before USANA I wouldn't listen to anyone," she laughs.



As anyone who knows Connie can attest, sponsoring people is not a problem for this dedicated Associate. Her office, “where we make a lot of money,” is filled with over a dozen trophies she’s won from USANA events, including a President’s Club award, President’s Award Finalist award, and three Top Associate Enroller awards. On the wall are numerous photos—reminders of some of the people they’ve met and the places they’ve been since being a part of USANA. Jim’s office, just around the corner and down the hall, contains a dream board filled with large homes, exotic vacation spots, and luxury cars.

Some of those dreams have already been fulfilled for this couple. Last year, Jim and Connie went car shopping and, much to the excitement of the salesperson, ended up coming home with not one, but two, brand new Mercedes—a black one for Connie and a silver convertible for Jim.

They were able to buy their current home just a year after joining USANA. “Before that, my income was the main income in the family. We lived in a very small home. Our bedroom was just that—we barely had room for a bed and that was it,” Jim laughs. But today, their eight-bedroom house fits them perfectly. In almost every corner can be found some type of symbolism of goals they have either achieved, or are hoping to achieve soon. In the entryway sits a Chinese fountain surrounded by a horse and a dragon. In Chinese culture, these two animals together stand for success.

Coincidentally, according to Chinese astrology, Jim and Connie were both born in the year of the horse, and as such, are seen as hard workers who eventually become successful in life. Above the fountain on the wall is an enlarged copy of a Canadian \$1 million bill, which symbolizes their goal of earning \$1 million in one year.



One of the most important aspects of their home, however, and one of the reasons they bought this particular home in the first place, is its large, spacious rooms in which to hold their own USANA presentations. “We were very impressed with the spacious living room this home had,” Jim explains. “We thought it would be perfect not only to hold in-home meetings, but it would also be perfect for our daughter, Peony, to dance.” Connie and Jim even had a mirror wall installed with the purpose of helping Peony perfect her already incredible dancing technique.

Earlier this year, however, Connie and Jim had to upgrade. So many people had been attending their presentations that they were running out of room. They have just finished remodeling their basement into a conference/entertainment room, complete with surround sound, microphones for singing Karaoke, a home cinema projector for meetings and

watching movies, and a remote control screen that descends from the ceiling. It was worth it to them to install everything they needed—no matter what the cost—to make their room as professional as possible because, “We sign up more people doing home meetings than anywhere else. And with this meeting room in our home, we get the best of both worlds—a professional, yet homey atmosphere,” Jim says.

And these meetings are making a world of difference in their business. Connie explains that even though she was honored to be recognized as the top sponsor in the company, she felt something was still missing. “I decided I needed to do some training to keep people growing in the business.” So, for the past two years, Connie has moved away from doing so much sponsoring and has focused more on training. And the results have been amazing. “Since we started training, our income has really grown,” Connie says. “Training is so much more important than just going out and sponsoring a lot of people.” And this is where she and Jim really work well together. They hold both English and Chinese training sessions that last

four weeks and include segments on how to get started, how to handle objections, having a winning attitude, and developing leadership. Connie also hosts Health & Freedom presentations twice a week, one in Mandarin and one in Cantonese. "I know a lot of Chinese people because of my job," Jim explains. "I make contacts and then send them over to Connie to talk to them." In return, if any of her Chinese Associates bring in English-speaking guests, Jim takes them into his office and does a one-on-one presentation with them. "We really have an advantage that between the two of us we speak six languages," Jim says. Aside from English, Connie speaks Cantonese and Mandarin, and Jim speaks German, French, and Spanish.

Even though Connie works the business so much that Jim jokes he has to call her on the phone to talk to her, their relationship is as strong as ever. He knows how much this business means to her and is willing to help her any way he can. And Connie is aware of it. "Jim is a really good person," she smiles. "Sometimes I'm working so hard that I don't have time to take care of the kids or the house, so Jim does it. He does whatever he can to help me." Jim adds, "We see what the other person needs and try to fill that need. If something needs to be done, we just do it."

When Connie and Jim aren't working their USANA business—which doesn't happen very often—Connie loves to cook. Chinese food is her specialty. In fact, throughout their home are reminders of her culture, from a rack of nearly a dozen pair of elegant slippers for shuffling around the house in, to numerous

colorful canisters filled with a variety of flavors of Chinese tea. She collects tea sets as well, and at last count had 10.

Jim enjoys exercising and reading. Their library contains hundreds of books in various languages covering a wide range of topics. Jim explains that the inspirational and self-help books have helped his personal growth immensely. "I was actually much more shy than I am now,"



he admits. "Unfortunately I missed a lot of opportunities with USANA in the beginning because, although I believed in USANA and understood how it could help other people, I often missed the chance to talk to people. I'm much better at approaching people now though. I take advantage of opportunities and I'm much more alert than before. I just feel much more relaxed in my life."

Some of that relaxation comes from the time freedom that they finally enjoy—cruises, traveling, and no more answering to a boss. Until he joined USANA, Jim had always dreamed of going on a cruise. "I used to walk

by the port where the passenger ships come and go and just look at the cruise ships," Jim remembers. "I thought, 'Some day I would like to go on a cruise,' but I never did. I never had the time, or the money, or the right person to go with." Now he's got all three, and that "Someday Isle" that Dr. Denis Waitley often speaks of, is a thing of the past. "Since joining USANA we've gone on four cruises," Jim laughs. And the feeling of taking off whenever they want for wherever they want is something they are still trying to get used to. "We were in New York for the USANA Celebration and afterward I went on to Colorado to visit my mom for her 92nd birthday," Jim says. "If I had been working a 'normal' job I wouldn't have been able to just take off like that because I didn't have that kind of freedom before joining USANA."

This freedom gives Jim and Connie the opportunity to travel more as well, and they have definitely taken advantage of it. With a successful worldwide business, Connie has visited Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, and Korea. For pleasure, they love going to Europe, Hawaii, and traveling through the U.S. and Canada. "We really enjoy meeting new people from different cultures and backgrounds," they say.

Jim and Connie also make sure to find the time to do what brought them together in the first place—dance. Dancing is such a big part of their lives that Connie and Jim have passed it onto their youngest daughter as well. Peony is 13 and has been dancing for seven years. In 2002 she was the British Columbia champion in both Latin and standard dancesport



(ballroom) in her age group. Not only can this young lady move her feet, but she's got a great voice as well. Last year Peony joined a televised singing competition for young singers and won. Sometimes she even performs at her parents' USANA Christmas parties. "The best part about Peony is not her talents," Jim says, "she's just a wonderful person—so considerate, kind, and thoughtful. She becomes so enthusiastic about small things, and she's great to be around." Jim remembers not too long ago, Peony being afraid that she wouldn't "be able to do USANA like mommy." He and Connie aren't too worried though. With her attitude and determination, they're sure she won't have a problem.

Connie and Jim are looking forward to their oldest daughter, Cecilia, becoming involved in the family business as well.



At 20, she is currently studying marketing at the local university. "I hope that when she graduates she and her boyfriend will get involved with USANA, too," Connie says.

Jim also has a 37-year-old daughter, Natalie, who has blessed his life with two grandchildren. "Natalie is a receptionist at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver, and speaks English, German, Spanish, and French fluently," Jim beams, "and a bit of some other languages as well. We are very blessed with all three of our daughters."

Connie and Jim are convinced that without USANA in their lives, their daughters wouldn't be able to have the things they have now. Their USANA income is putting Cecilia through college and allows her to drive a Mercedes as well. And although Cecilia is very independent, Connie is grateful she can help her out this way. Peony is able to take private Mandarin lessons in addition to her singing lessons. They've even hired the current U.S. Latin dancesport champion to give her private

lessons. "If we weren't in USANA, she wouldn't be able to take part in these activities because they are very expensive hobbies," Jim says.

Their freedom also allows them to travel to dance competitions throughout the world. "I took Peony to Europe twice for a special training in ballroom dancing," Jim recalls.

"We saw some of the world's great dancers there, and it was a wonderful experience for both of us."

The benefits Connie



Photography by Jim Barabae

to be able to help people with their health and their finances. It's wonderful to be with positive, upbeat, likeminded people all the time rather than negative people who try to pull you down." In turn, Connie and Jim have a much more positive attitude about life. "We like the opportunities that financial freedom allows us," Jim says. "We have more choices than we had before, which makes our lives that

much more exciting. We can donate to Children's Hunger Fund and other charities, and we are able to donate products to some very sick people who don't have family close by to help them."

and Jim's family are receiving due to USANA are too many to number. Ideas they thought were once impossible are now possible. "We had a lot of limiting beliefs about what we could do or have," Jim recalls, "and

those limits have been stretched. We never realized we would be this successful." In the beginning stages of their business, Jim thought how happy he would be if Connie could earn enough money with USANA to pay for half the mortgage. "Well," he laughs, "she ended up not only matching my salary, but she doubled my salary.

Connie and USANA certainly surpassed my expectations."

Aside from the health, financial, and freedom aspects, they say, "It makes us feel very good



Jim continues, "A large part of our happiness comes from the attitude of constant gratitude that we try to carry with us at all times. We have been blessed in so many ways, and we sincerely appreciate all that other people have done for us, especially all of the great people in the USANA family."

Connie concludes, "It's always been in my heart to do these types of

things for people, but I was never able to before USANA. But with the income we have now, we can do all that and more." For Jim and Connie, their USANA love story is only getting better.