

Newsletter (Issue No. 63)

March 2016

Published by : Hong Kong Blind Union

Members of Editorial Group :

Tsui Kai Ming (Adviser)

Jess Shek Kin Chong (Chief Editor)

Lilian Leung Shuk Kwan (Community Relations Officer)

Address : Rm 13-20, G/F, Tsui Ying House, Tsui Ping Estate,
Kwun Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Telephone : (852)2339 0666

Fax : (852)2338 7850

Website : www.hkbu.org.hk

E-mail : info@hkbu.org.hk

Facebook : www.facebook.com/HKBlindUnion

Contents

- 1. Savouring an Opportunity**
Written by Tsang Kin Cheuk
- 2. My Impressions from the Trip to Hong Kong**
Written by Yang Qi Jun
- 3. Exchange Innovation Experience, Share Technological Achievements**
Written by Fred Leung
- 4. Donation Form**
- 5. What's News**
- 6. Our Union**

Editor's Remarks

Written by Jess SHEK

There can be all sorts of consequential exchange among people in different situations, with impact of different extent. When I go out with my cane and take the MTR by myself, I come across a few passengers who are curious about my ability to travel independently as a visually impaired person. Taking the initiative to chat with me, they ask me many questions about the ways in which I handle my daily needs without sight. Though sometimes I am so exhausted after work that I just want to take a nap, I will still try my very best to answer their questions in a bid to use the brief exchange in the train compartment to make them better understand the visually impaired. The three articles in this issue of our Newsletter illustrate three occasions, three forms of exchange and the diverse changes.

First, the exchange between manufacturers and users promotes the development and marketing of assistive tools. In recent years, our Information Technology Advisory Committee has had frequent idea exchange with government departments, visually impaired persons' organizations and manufacturers of assistive tools in Mainland China at different seminars. We

have been jointly developing information technology products. By means of this sort of interaction and exchange, assistive tools and equipments produced have been rendered more congruent with the needs of the visually impaired. For details, please refer to the article "Exchange Innovation Experience, Share Technological Achievements".

Next, stemming from the co-operation between visually impaired and sighted runners in a relay, there is the power of forging ahead and the reflection of the spirit of complementing each other's inadequacies and moving on with concerted efforts. In the article "Savouring an Opportunity", Tsang Kin Cheuk shares with us his experience from organizing the "International White Cane Day cum Run for Vision 2015".

Finally, it is possible for a person to have cultural impact and insights in an unfamiliar environment through cultural and academic exchanges. Through arrangement by Blind Union and the Rainbow Missions, Yang Qi Jun came to the Chinese University of Hong Kong from the Mainland as an exchange student last October. She also had the opportunity to meet local visually impaired persons. She had her vision broadened by the trip. She noticed the differences between Hong Kong and Mainland students in their ability to learn as well as the mode of learning. She also discovered that persons with disabilities in Hong Kong must strive continuously to make progress in daily life and work, and let nobody simply take pity on them. The article "My Impressions from the Trip to Hong Kong" gives in detail her exchange experience.

We recently received an estate donation from the late Madam Lam Lau Hung. Madam Lam left behind in the world her love. Here we sincerely thank her for turning love into power in support of our work. In fact, donors can continue their care for the visually impaired and enhance our ability to help the visually impaired achieve independence and self-strengthening by making donations through their estates or life insurance policies. This can be a very meaningful arrangement. The donors may state in the will to give Hong Kong Blind Union entirely or partially of estate. When taking out an insurance policy, donors may also name Hong Kong Blind Union as a beneficiary entitled to all or part of the insured sum.

I would like to thank our member Fred Leung, our colleague Tsang Kin

Cheuk and student Yang Qi Jun for contributing articles to this issue of our Newsletter to share with us their experience. I also thank our Community Relations Officer, Ms Lilian Leung for her assistance in coordinating the publication work. In the start of the Year of the Monkey, may I wish you all progress and good health in the new year ahead.

Savouring an Opportunity

Written by Tsang Kin Cheuk

On 11 October 2015, Hong Kong Blind Union held the “International White Cane Day cum Run for Vision 2015”, the year’s final fund-raising event. I was responsible for co-ordination. The success of the event not only due to satisfactory completion of all that organized for the day, it was also the result of capturing the opportunities ahead and making concerted efforts.

I remember due to the lack of experience, I did not arrange any volunteers to help out in the first training session prior to the event. We just have three staff members deployed to help leading twenty visually impaired runners from the gathering point to the sports ground for training. As a result, there were, of course, all sorts of mistakes and omissions. Fortunately, the visually impaired runners did not complain at all. Conversely, they gave me valuable feedback, making me better understand their needs and difficulties, which rendered later arrangements more congruent with their needs.

When I saw each visually impaired runner paired up with a sighted corporate runner running with confidence on the running track, all previous confusion vanished instantly. At that moment, the feeling that visual impairment only gave them inconvenience, not incapability definitely dawned upon me. Clearly in my sight were each runner’s speed and rhythm. Their movement was so relaxed and natural, and sometimes even more at ease than sighted runners’.

I firmly believe that to reach such standard, one has definitely got to be consistently trained for a long time no matter he/she is visually impaired or not. I wonder who can imagine a blind person routinely walking alone in the street with white cane in hand can run more steadily and faster than many people, after putting on the running apparel and running shoes. Visually impaired runners establish implicit understanding with the guide runner through a tether.

The effort in the background is beyond doubt. It is conceivable that they said no to inconvenience whenever they left home and came up with ways to participate in all sorts of training resolutely. I wonder if it is possible to reach such standard without persistence and conviction on their part. This is also the reason why I respect them.

Surely, for visually impaired runners to succeed, it was necessary to match them with suitable guide runners. There was thus an opportunity for the staff of the sponsoring corporates to personally experience the capability of the visually impaired, so as to complement each other's inadequacies, bring out the best of individual's talents, and move on with concerted efforts. In this event, most of the corporate guide runners were not having the habit of exercising, not to mention running with visually impaired persons. Through this event, they were given the inspiration and motivation to do exercise. Even those who cannot see clearly or cannot see at all are able to find ways to overcome their inconvenience and make a way for themselves. How come those who see well refuse to move on and leave idle their nature-bestowed vision?

Gradually, I saw that the runners built up implicit understanding among themselves, identified suitable rhythms, and proceed from short to long, from slow to fast, and from easy to tough. They ran in their own ways. Though it was windy and rainy on the day of the event, I understood that every step thereafter was to excel and blaze new path right from the moment they started.

I had a valuable lesson on life education. In actuality, "opportunities" that Blind Union promotes are realized by independence, self-strengthening, equality and mutual help.

My Impressions from the Trip to Hong Kong **Written by Yang Qi Jun**

(Editor's note: The author, a visually impaired student from Binzhou College of Medicine, Shandong Province, came to the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) last December as an exchange student through the arrangement of Blind Union and the Rainbow Missions.)

On 2 October 2015, I boarded a Hong Kong-bound flight with much

excitement and joy. It was my first visit to Hong Kong and I was curious about everything there.

Chinese medicine is the specialty of my pursuit. I was therefore interested in the Chinese medicine specialty of CUHK. It was lucky that I was able to sit in on the class on The Emperor's Inner Canon. Lessons given by Professor Jiang Yuan An were very vivid. Citing cases to explain theories, he was able to present complicated concepts concisely, clearly and comprehensibly. In addition to gaining professional knowledge and incisive understanding of the class, I found that sitting in on CUHK classes allowed me to discover the difference between Hong Kong students and their Mainland counterparts in terms of both the learning habit and ability. In Hong Kong, before each lesson, the lecturer will send out the materials to be taught in class to students. The purpose is to let students have enough time to prepare beforehand. The lecturer will not repeat simple questions in class but will go straight to the main theme to give more in-depth elucidation based on the contents of the lesson. Then questions will be left for students to look for answers themselves after class. The responsibility of learning on each student is thus very heavy. Yet, the ability to learn gets enhanced continuously through preparation beforehand, in-class learning and revisions. Perhaps this accounts for the difference between our Mainland students and their Hong Kong counterparts in the ability to learn and the overall quality.

In addition to studying, we exchanged with several local visually impaired students on the current education of Mainland and Hong Kong for visually impaired persons. My understanding is that the care and help given to persons with disabilities by Hong Kong citizens are considerable. But in order to have a bright future, it is necessary for persons with disabilities to have adequate capability. Nobody will give him/her the green light just because of his/her physical disability. In Hong Kong, equality and fairness are the prerequisites for employment and daily life. In my opinion, this perhaps is the outcome arising from the difference in historical and social background. The present Hong Kong has gradually been formed following 100-odd years of economic transformation and social development. Mainland China is now going through all these development and changes. In other words, perhaps the present Hong Kong is the future Mainland.

The trip to Hong Kong not only gave me joy and excitement but also it was

a gaining of insight and understanding. It was a vivid lesson of first-hand experience. Everyone I met or got in touch with during the few days in Hong Kong turned out to be the best teachers of the lesson.

Exchange Innovation Experience, Share Technological Achievements Written by Fred Leung

Hong Kong Blind Union has had exchange of experience and co-operation with government departments, organizations of visually impaired persons and manufacturers of assistive tools in Mainland China constantly in developing information technology products. Our Information Technology Advisory Committee attended the 11th China Information Accessibility Forum held in Beijing last September as well as the Massage and Assistive Technology Seminar for Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau held in Fuzhou last December. At both conferences, I introduced the work of our Accessible Digital Technology Centre.

There were a lot of study reports presented in the two conferences. Visually impaired persons are going to benefit much from them, and have different aspects of their daily life considerably improved too. We brought in some newly developed assistive tools from the Mainland to our Accessible Digital Technology Centre for introduction to our members. For example, the Braille Mini Writer, which is a portable electronic notebook for visually impaired persons. Being affordable in price and good in quality, it can facilitate note-taking and reading documents.

Let us look back on the development of assistive tools for the visually impaired. In the past, from high-end items such as brailers, to common commodities such as talking clocks, had to be ordered from overseas. They were expensive and it took time to order them. What's more, there was language restriction as Chinese was surely not available. With the exchange of experience between us and the Mainland, there has been a considerable development of the manufacturing and development of assistive products in Mainland China since the mid-1990s. Moreover, the marketing strategy eventually changed from placing emphasis on the visually impaired only to catering to the entire community. In the past, talking clocks had to be ordered from overseas. Now they can easily be purchased from ordinary shops. This has drastically increased the circulation volume of products and lowered their

prices. In the 1990s, an imported talking scale costed about HK\$1500. Now, a similar China-made product is priced at about \$200. This is very indicative of the price gap.

Changes in concepts and strategies enrich products in both variety and quality, and lower production costs as well as sale prices. It's equally important that exchange of experience and ideas ensures products are congruent with needs and do keep abreast with the times to ultimately benefit more visually impaired persons as well as other members of the community.

What's News?

Hong Kong Blind Union had first run a stall at the Lunar New Year Fair in Fa Hui Park, Mong Kok from 2-8 February 2016, selling different types of New Year products. 16 visually impaired members had joined the project to run the stall. They worked hard from fund raising, material sourcing, product design, product production, stall decoration to product selling. This special experience helped to promote the spirit of self-help and mutual-help as well as realized our mission of "equality, opportunities and independence".