

Newsletter (Issue No.67)

July 2017

Published by :

Hong Kong Blind Union

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香港失明人協進會為有限公司註冊的慈善團體

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## **Editor's Remarks**

By Jess Shek

In April, we organized three activities with special meaning respectively to let the public savour visually impaired persons' musical talents, make it possible for us and donors to understand the educational needs of visually impaired students in Mainland China, and earnestly thank our donors and volunteers for supporting us continuously. Through these activities, we have all gained more in-depth exchanges and understanding. According to Mr. Kwan, a donor, his view about the visually impaired changed following face-to-face interactions with them. He thinks instead of being passive and dependent, they can look after themselves and get things done on their own.

On 8 April, Blind Union held the Li Bing Vocal Music Development Fund and Li Chu Shuk-kwan Education Fund Charity Concert cum Award Presentation Ceremony to raise money for the two funds, commend visually impaired students with outstanding academic achievements, award scholarships to visually impaired young persons showing singing talent, and pay tributes to visually impaired students' supportive companions. For information on the origin of the two funds and snapshots of the

concert, check out the article “A Concert Brimmed with a Spirit that Potentials Know No Bounds”.

Every year, we make arrangement for those sponsoring the "Education Fund for People with Visual Impairment in China" to go to the Mainland to visit students being sponsored by them so that they can better understand the learning and life of visually impaired Mainland students and give them encouragement. This year is no exception. Between April 13 and 15, a 10-person delegation consisting of our Executive Committee Members, staff and sponsors went to Meizhou in Guangdong Province to visit visually impaired students. In the article “The Saplings I Saw in MeiZhou”, Fiona, a sponsor participating in the visit, gives a detailed account about her visit to Meizhou. If you wish to make donations to sponsor the education of visually impaired Mainland students, please visit our website to download a donation form.

Thanks to the participation by many volunteers and donors, our “Together We Excel – Volunteer Award Presentation Ceremony cum Donors Gathering 2017” held on 27 April drew to a successful close. On the occasion, we released our first corporate video. Donors, volunteers and members taking part enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon. To review the wonderful flash-backs of the event, read the article “Thank You for Being with Us”.

I am grateful to Fiona Chan, a sponsor of "Education Fund for People with Visual Impairment in China" for contributing an article to this issue of our newsletter to share what she experienced during her visit to visually impaired students in Meizhou. I am also very grateful to our Assistant Community Relations Manager Eva Mak for her assistance in coordinating the work of publication. 19 August is our Flag Day in Kowloon. I earnestly call on you to be our Flag Day volunteers or donors to help us promote the self-help movement of the visually impaired.

For any questions in connection with our Flag Day, feel free to contact us at 2339 0666.

### **A Concert Exuberant with a Spirit that Potentials Know No Bounds**

By Eva Mak

Unable to see or to have clear vision though visually impaired students are, they all possess different congenital potentials awaiting furtherance. Likewise, deep in their

hearts is a fervency looking for a target in the race into the future. For years placing premium on visually impaired young persons' education and employment, Hong Kong Blind Union held the Li Bing Vocal Music Development Fund and Li Chu Shuk-kwan Education Fund Charity Concert cum Award Presentation Ceremony on 8 April. It was held to raise funds, commend visually impaired students with outstanding academic achievements as well as musicality and pay tributes to visually impaired students' supportive companions.

On this occasion, the education fund scholarship was awarded to Tsang Tsz-Kwan, Kelvin Yang, Joby Wong and Merrick Ho. They all achieved admirable academic results. The three students awarded by Li Bing Vocal Music Development Fund included Sharon Choi, Li Hin-Kwai and Michelle Siu. With a sweet "vocal voice", they all performed at the Concert, and surprised the audience with what they commanded.

"Talent given one by providence is bound to be of use" is quite a cliché. However, the saying is never archaic. All students, whether sighted or visually impaired, have their own talents that deserve to be polished or brought into play. In his speech, our President Chong Chan-Yau said: "Some 20 years ago, the incumbent Chief Executive Officer of Ebenezer School Dr. Alice Yuk introduced me to the late vocalist Li Bing. The establishment of the two funds aims to train up visually impaired persons so as to make it possible for their skills or talents to be brought into play."

The two funds were originally established in remembrance of Li Bing and Li Chu Shuk-Kwan. It is necessary to mention the love for all embodied therein. Citing the Bible, founder of the two funds Rev. Li King-Hung said: "The love for all exemplified by Jesus Christ starts from loving the disadvantaged. It was based on such a spirit that the two funds were established for visually impaired young persons to make it possible for them to bring into play their talents."

Mrs. Linda Ma Wong Pui-Kee, founder of Citywide Renewal was invited to be the officiating guest. She stated unequivocally that the Concert carried an extraordinary meaning and that she was much impressed. She also gave advice to those present, telling them to "walk by faith, not by sight" in life.

Aside from the presentation of awards, there were also wonderful musical performances by the three Li Bing Vocal Music Development Fund awardees this year, Li Bing's students and a choir made up of current and past students of Ebenezer

School. It's most pleasing that the charity activity was warmly supported by a broad range of people giving expression to the point that love knows no bounds and propelling the development of potentials of visually impaired students.

### **The Saplings I saw in Meizhou**

By Fiona Chan

"It takes 10 years to grow trees, but a hundred years to rear people." I have sponsored "Education Fund for People with Visual Impairment in China" for more than 10 years. Never before did I think of getting an opportunity to visit them personally. What I knew about those sponsored students is limited to the names and basic personal information that I noted from the annual reports on their academic performance that I received. So on learning that Blind Union was going to organize this visit, My 10-year-old son and I immediately signed up for it.

On the day we set out, the 10 of us took over 6 hours to finally reach the hotel where we stayed. On the following day, we started our trip at 8 o'clock in the morning. When I stepped into the bus, I saw my sponsored students Qi Lian-Sheng and Jiang Bing.

Lian-Sheng's home was on a hill 100 kilometers away from the hotel. After a car ride of an hour, we changed over to several smaller vehicles to cover another 7-8 kilometers of narrow mountain tracks and then arrived at a place close to his home. After getting off, we walked uphill for 10 minutes to reach his home.

The expression "a home with four bare walls" is not sufficient for describing Lian-Sheng's house. Several walls collapsed, and the outer walls worn off totally. Lian-Sheng is a left-behind child. His dad and mom are factory workers in Shenzhen and Dalian respectively and they seldom come home. On this occasion, his dad took a special trip back from Shenzhen on learning of our visit. Like the other students of the special school, he comes home only once a month and his uncle takes care of him. His uncle and aunt earn their living by farming. His family still uses matches to light a fire and does not even have a television; the only electrical appliance they have is a refrigerator. It's such a big contrast with the well-developed municipal scene in Meizhou City. I felt being in a different country. Perhaps that is the urban-rural difference! Being very hospitable, his dad gave us a large bag of freshly pan-fried home-grown peanuts, as well as some fragrant self-pressed peanut oil. He

even went up to the hills right away to get us a lot of bamboo shoots. That was materialistically insignificant, but sentimentally considerable.

Next we travelled more than an hour and reached Jiang Bing's home. Comparing with Lian-Sheng's home, the place where Jiang Bing lives is better off, looking like a walled village in the New Territories.

Jiang Bing's father delivers newspaper, working just half a day daily. He is the bread winner of the family. Her mother is a farmer. She has an elder brother who still goes to school. Their living conditions are comparatively better. However, they are still quite uptight as only her father works. Jiang Bing is a quiet and gentle girl. She tends to keep to herself very much and worries her mother. Her mother said it was fortunate that she could go to school and she wished her daughter could learn a skill for her to make her own living in the future. Jiang Bing's father also showed great hospitality, thanking me again and again, and giving us a lot of homemade preserved cabbage. At the time of our departure, he thanked me again. I can still recall his look of gratitude.

It is really gratifying to know that the small amount of money that I donate every month can improve their living. The visit to Meizhou on this occasion was indeed meaningful! What they have to brave through are not just visual impairment and poverty. There are still many many challenges. I hope that education can indeed give them strength and hope.

### **Thank You for being with Us**

By Jess Shek

On 22 April, we held our **“Together We Excel – Volunteer Award Presentation Ceremony cum Donors Gathering 2017”**. Over 90 participants attended this event, including our volunteers, donors and members. This was our first time holding an event specifically for volunteers and donors that aimed to thank them for their support of our work. At the same time, it offered an opportunity for them to interact with our members, staff and Executive Committee Members, and better understand our services provided to the visually impaired.

To make it possible for those present to better understand our philosophy, history and work, we released our first corporate video. We also presented commendation certificates to more than 40 volunteers who volunteered for the Union in excess of a

certain number of hours over the past year. Some volunteers shared their experiences of service. For this event, some members also arranged musical performances, giving participants a happy afternoon.

“This gathering of volunteers and donors is very meaningful, making available an opportunity for volunteers, donors and visually impaired members to interact with one another. Witnessing the award of commendations to many volunteers, I understand the efforts made by them in volunteering. Furthermore, having seen the musical performances by some visually impaired members, I am very much impressed,” said Mr. Kwan Tak-Wah, one of the donors participating in the event.

Mr. Kwan also pointed out that after becoming a donor of the Union, he gained more chances to be in touch with the visually impaired, which led to a change in his long-held view about them. “I am of the view that instead of being ones dependent on others, the visually impaired are able to take charge of themselves, independent and self-reliant,” he said.

On that day, some of our members were also awarded commendations as volunteers. Fung Po-Wah was one of them. For her, serving as a volunteer has provided her with opportunities to help other visually impaired friends. She was proud to witness them joining the community on getting back on their own feet. “I am one with non-congenital visual impairment. At that time I had no visually impaired friends around me. Almost all those around me were sighted. I did not quite understand visually impaired persons. Through participating in the Union’s volunteering work, I came to know many visually impaired friends. I then understood that the loss of vision is not an insurmountable obstacle,” she said when sharing with others what she gained from volunteering for the Union.

As stated by our President Chong Chan-Yau in his welcoming speech, “Visual impairment is not tantamount to total loss.” Ever since its establishment, Hong Kong Blind Union has made quite a few breakthroughs in different areas in a bid to strive for visually impaired persons’ due rights and privileges, encourage them to be independent and self-reliant, and promote their integration into the community. To achieve our vision, we need more people to join us. Please encourage those around you to support our work by becoming our donors or volunteers. Check out our website for more details or contact our Assistant Community Relations Manager Eva Mak at [evamak@hkbu.org.hk](mailto:evamak@hkbu.org.hk)

**What's News?**

Hong Kong Blind Union – Hong Kong Kowloon Flag Day 2017

Date: 19-8-2017 (Saturday)

Volunteers Registration: 2339 0666

Website: [www.hkbu.org.hk](http://www.hkbu.org.hk)

Email: [info@hkbu.org.hk](mailto:info@hkbu.org.hk)

Donation: HSBC 511-529299-001