

**Better Tomorrow for All December 2020**

Issue 77

Published by: Hong Kong Blind Union

Members of Editorial Group:

Merrick Ho, Chief Editor

Kammy Ko, Fundraising & 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](http://www.hkbu.org.hk) E-mail: [info@hkbu.org.hk](mailto:info@hkbu.org.hk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HKBlindUnion](https://www.facebook.com/HKBlindUnion)

## **Contents**

1. Finding Hope: In Helping Others, You Help Yourself  
By Cody
2. Removing Obstacles and Making the Internet Accessible for All  
By Terry Wong
3. Strengthening the Mind and Body at Home  
By Eddie Chung
4. Activity review

## **Editor's remarks**

By Merrick Ho

In just a few months since the publication of the last issue, Hong Kong has experienced several ups and downs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. All sectors have been trying to adjust their strategies in order to strike a fine balance between combating the pandemic and maintaining a normal life. For the visually impaired, they have been building resilience to overcome work and environmental changes while facing a deterioration of eyesight, with the help from caring people.

In light of changes in the job market, the organisation has received support from kind-hearted people by hiring Blind Union's members as Blind Union's ambassadors. Amongst them is our member Cody, who shares his joy in participating in this program through the article "Finding Hope: In Helping Others, You Help Yourself". Through this program Cody has picked himself up again in the critical moment of eyesight deterioration, enabling him to become the confident person that he is today. The program has further moulded him to become a "giver" to deliver assistance to others.

Students' learning patterns have undergone immense changes under the pandemic. Eddie Chung, Blind Union's Vocational and Educational Resources Centre social worker, shares his personal experiences at home and his growth journey in the article "Strengthening the Mind and Body at Home", introducing his experience of teaching Wing Chun Kung Fu to our members online. In the self-help movement for the visually impaired, the secret of its sustainable success is to make good use of one's own strengths and transform them into actions that help people, at the same time helping oneself.

The "stay-at-home economy" spawned by the pandemic poses both challenges and opportunities for the visually impaired. Terry Wong, Blind Union's Project Manager, introduces our organisation's work in promoting barrier-free information technology in his article "Removing Obstacles and Making the Internet Accessible for All". As an organisation with relevant experience in the Asia Pacific region, HKBU will continue to provide barrier-free online browsing experience for visually impaired people in various countries.

At the time of writing, "The Same Song Charity Concert", of which we are the beneficiary organisation, is entering the final stage of preparation. The event has been rescheduled twice, yet it can still be held successfully all thanks to the support of the parties concerned. Just as Hong Kong has weathered through many ups and downs in the past year, our determination and optimism will surely lead us to a better tomorrow.

## **Finding Hope: In Helping Others, You Help Yourself**

By Cody

(Editor's Note: With donation support from benefactors, two phases of the "Employment Programme for Visually Impaired Persons" were launched in June and November respectively this year. 18 visually impaired members who were underemployed or unemployed due to COVID-19 were recruited as "Blind Union Ambassadors" for one month. Their main duties included handling routine centre work, member liaison and caring, etc. The author of this article was among the first batch of ambassadors. At the request of the author, the author's Chinese name is not disclosed in this publication. The title of this article has been added by the editor.)

Year 2020 was a turning point in my life. In March, my eyesight was rapidly declining, and I was physically and mentally devastated. Luckily, the social workers of the Hong Kong Blind Union supported me whole-heartedly during the low point of my life. The pneumonia epidemic also happened at the same time but the social workers still made home visits and phone calls, which instilled in me more courage.

I am extremely grateful to the sponsors and Blind Union for organising this meaningful programme, "Blind Union Ambassador", which helped me step out of the haze and learn to become a member of the visually impaired community. During the process, social workers were kind enough to design a telephone care service for me, so that during the time of the pandemic, we were still able to get in touch with our visually impaired members by phone to learn about their recent conditions and to listen to their voices and needs. By keeping in touch, we were able to share our experiences and understand the different situations and problems faced by the visually impaired. These experiences were invaluable to me, adding motivation to my work.

Blind Union also arranged for me to learn how the visually impaired uses smart phones and gave me the opportunity to teach other members how to use the device. This was a very meaningful way for me to experience the concept of teaching each other and at the same time, helping yourselves through helping others. It also helped me see how the visually impaired can overcome their difficulties through their smart phones, which also boosted their self-confidence.

All in all, thanks to Blind Union and all the sponsors - a new door has been opened for me. The incredible kindness in humanity have led me to rekindle lost hope. With their help, I have walked out of the darkness and let in light into my life.

## **Removing Obstacles and Making the Internet Accessible for All**

By Terry Wong

(Editor's note: The author is Blind Union's Accessible Digital Technology Centre Manager, offering consultancy services for web accessibility. He is also in charge of advocacy work.)

The rapid growth of the internet has driven convenience for all. However, if online images and linking icons are not accompanied by text, or if their functions do not fully support keyboard control, these sites are unable to meet accessibility design standards and will make it very difficult for the visually impaired to navigate.

In fact, the visually impaired can enjoy the same experience of browsing the Internet as the general public with the help of screen reading software, as long as the web page meets accessibility design standards. In 2013, we set up a social enterprise, "Web Access for All". The team will systematically inspect web pages or mobile applications and write test reports, listing non-compliant areas and specific recommendations for improvement according to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" (WCAG) international standard. In addition to providing consulting services to fulfill customer requirements, we also takes actions proactively, for example, in April this year, we took the initiative to test local news-related mobile apps to raise awareness of IT accessibility. Many of our inspectors are visually impaired. This will not only increase their employment opportunities, but also ensure that the contents of the reports meet the needs of the visually impaired users.

In addition to the active promotion of web accessibility in Hong Kong, we were also invited by the World Blind Union Asia Pacific (WBUAP) to launch a campaign to promote web accessibility among the region and therefore we conducted a survey on web and mobile accessibility in the Asia Pacific region in the last quarter of 2019. The "WBUAP Regional Webinar - Web Accessibility Adoption Level in the Asia Pacific Region" was held on 22 Oct 2020 to result the survey results, attracting more than 130 participants from 12 countries and regions. Representatives from World Wide Web Consortium and the Hong Kong Association of Banks were also present to introduce the most updated development of WCAG and share the experience in promoting web accessibility among the bank industry respectively, and also to encourage local governments to strengthen their efforts in this area.

We firmly believe that now that the Internet has eliminated geographical limitations, the issue of accessibility is no longer the business of a particular region or industry, but the well-being of the visually impaired across the globe. We will continue to play the role of advocacy and supervision in making the Internet an accessible domain for the visually impaired.

## **Strengthening the Mind and Body at Home**

By: Eddie Chung

(Editor's Note: The author is a social worker of Blind Union's Jockey Club Vocational and Educational Resources Centre, in charge of assisting visually impaired students and parents.)

This August, during the outbreak of the third wave of COVID-19, I organised an online parent-child Wing Chun (詠春) experiential event for the parent group under the centre, attracting 20 visually impaired students and their parents to participate. Many children found it an interesting experience and wanted to know the reason behind organising this activity.

In the past few months, I have received frequent feedback from parents that they are unable to let their visually impaired children play outdoors because of the pandemic, but they do not want them to be addicted to electronic devices all day long either. Me and my two nephews, aged 10 and 6, were facing the same situation. In order to kill time, I decided to make use of my few years of experience of practicing Wing Chun, to teach my nephews to do some exercises that I used to do at the gym, which I found to be not only interesting but also good for our bodies. I decided to bring the activity back to the center and share the benefits with the students and parents.

The moves in this activity are carefully selected. For example, the "Sun character thrusting fist" is a series of quick punches that are good for the development of the child's arms and shoulders, as well as for relieving shoulder pain caused by prolonged exposure to the computer and housework. Another move is to retreat with a squat while punching the parent's palm. Since the exercise requires both parties to keep a fixed distance from each other, it helps train the child's sense of distance and is more effective for children with Amblyopia. The "firm stance" and "squatting backward stance" are also great for strengthening the core muscles of the abdomen and lower back.

In addition to tough physical training, fun is also indispensable. For example, in the "Sun character thrusting fist" exercise mentioned above, we counted from 1 to 60 while punching, and when we counted to numbers which end with "2" or "7", we will shout "Tai-yeung" (meaning: the sun) and "Hok yip jun bou" (meaning: wishing them excellence in academic studies) respectively. If the number is wrong, we will have to re-calculate, which trains our concentration. Also, the activity of children punching the parent's palm can be modified to punching the left fist, right fist, or a combination of the two, which makes the exercise more fun.

After the activity, my colleagues who demonstrated in front of the screen with me were really

exhausted. I believe the children have had a good night's sleep after the release of energy that day. I hope all the visually impaired students and their parents will not give up being fit and healthy just because they are not able to go out. This way, we can stay “fitter” to face the challenges ahead!

## **Activity review**

25 September 2020

### **Yan's Kitchen (Online Event)**

During the pandemic, people have shifted away from out-of-home dining to at-home cooking for health reasons. Everyone has become “Epidemic chefs”! In view of this, Blind Union held an online activity “Yan’s Kitchen”, teaching members to cook “Braised fermented chicken wings with potatoes”. The activity included the following sessions: Introduction of ingredients, recipe explanation, cooking instructions and Q&A time. Audio-description service was used in the activity to explain cooking instructions, and it was so novel and refreshing that many members asked for the event to be organised again.

24 October 2020

### **First Aid Talk**

How much do you know about first aid? To enhance members’ safety awareness, Blind Union invited Hong Kong St. John Ambulance to our Centre to explain first aid and CPR knowledge. An Attendance Certificate was issued to participants after the seminar.

31 October 2020

### **Introduction to Assistive equipment – Learning and daily life usage (Online Event)**

To assist visually impaired students and their parents, the Vocational and Educational Resources Centre organised an online activity to introduce assistive equipment to help young visually impaired students cope with challenges in daily life. The activity was hosted by our visually impaired members, who shared with us how to use assistive equipment to facilitate learning and daily life from the users’ perspective.

20 November 2020

### **Live Streaming at Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit (Online Event)**

Although it was not possible for members to visit the Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit this year as usual due to the pandemic, Blind Union has switched to a live webcast to describe the expo exhibits on air, allowing members to ask questions instantly. Through the webcast, members can learn more about how innovative technology can help the elderly and people with disabilities live in community and nursing homes.

21 November 2020

### **Jockey Club Sports Programme with Audio-Description Service Kickoff (Online Event)**

Blind Union held a kick-off ceremony for the Jockey Club Sports Programme with Audio-Description Service, which was broadcasted live on Facebook. The event not only introduced



the details of the service, but also invited Mr. Alex Fong, Dr. Lobo Louie, Mr. Lee Tak-nang and Mr. Keyman Ma to discuss the future development of sports audio-description services.

25 November 2020

#### The Same Song Charity Concert

Held by the Opera Society of Hong Kong, the event was repeatedly postponed due to the social movement and the pandemic. However, all thanks to the support of all parties, the concert was finally held successfully at the Hong Kong City Hall. Once again, we would like to thank the organisers and all the volunteers! Our visually impaired members were among the professional musicians performing in the concert. In order to share the concert with our supporters, we have set up a live webcast of the concert, allowing more people to enjoy the performances of the musicians. If you are interested, please visit our Facebook page to watch the brilliant performances on that day.