

# Athletes brave disabilities to shine for Hong Kong



# TYR

**The Young Reporter**  
-by HKBU journalism students since 1969-

# 06

# Contents

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## FEATURES

### 10|CLONES ON A TINY SCALE

Miniature artists regard their art as a visualisation of memories and dreams

### 11|TALKATIVE PETS

A parrot can live up to 60 years so be ready for some serious chattering

## COVER STORY

### 12|JUST AS GOOD

To the intellectually disabled, Special Olympics is not just a contest

## REVIEW

### 19|JUST GOOD MUSIC

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**INTERVIEWS** Have you caught the "Siu Ming Goes to Guangzhou" fever? P16



Chong Chan-yau

**OPINION** A snapshot of accessibility P20

## EDITOR'S NOTE

On behalf of the TYR Editorial Board, I would like to express our condolences to those who perished in the magnitude-9 earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan's Tohoku region on March 11, and wish their families well.

While the Japanese had shown the world their discipline and resilience during crisis, and struggle to get on with their life, some athletes are striving hard to achieve their goals in the Special Olympics for the intellectually disabled to be held in Athens this summer. Despite their mental retardation, these sportsmen try to lead a normal life with the support of their families and coaches.

By contrast, some Hong Kong people have much to be shameful about for starting a run on salt, on the groundless rumours that the radiation fallout from stricken Japanese nuclear power plants could reach here and salt could be a cure for radiation.

Rather than falling for tall stories, Hong Kong people should count their blessings and learn to live a thoughtful and fruitful life by processing what they see and hear with reason.

Alan Kwok Kim-fung  
Chief Editor



# Poor retirement plan can't benefit all elders

Frustration increases as progress on retirement scheme remains sluggish

BY THOMAS CHAN



*Many elders are not entitled to sufficient welfare support in their retirement.*

**H**ong Kong's evidently increasing number of old people has yet to tackle an incentive to improve a retirement scheme to support retirees in their twilight years.

The Census and Statistics Department estimated that by 2033 people aged 65 or older will constitute one-quarter of the city's population, up 12.9 per cent from now.

Dr Leong Che-hung, chairman of the government's Elderly Commission, said the government should start research on its retirement protection policy.

"They have to look at the full picture. The policy should not only ease elders' financial burden in retirement, but also address other issues related to their livelihood, such as the healthcare system."

Hong Kong's existing retirement system is based on the three-pillar model issued by the World Bank in 1994. The model comprises of benefit pension by the government, contribution pension by private sectors and personal savings.

According to the Labour and Welfare Bureau, this model is the combination

of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, Old Age Allowance (also known as "fruit money") and Disability Allowance as benefit pension, Mandatory Provident Fund as contribution pension and voluntary private savings.

Yet, Dr Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung, social science lecturer at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, said it failed to reach the international standard because the CSSA and DA "cannot be applied to all elders".

As stated on the Social Welfare Department website, CSSA and DA are for residents who cannot support themselves financially or those who are severely disabled.

"Only fruit money can be regarded as the first tier of the model. The inclusion of the CSSA and DA is not justified because welfare for elders should be seen as handouts," said Dr Cheung.

The government's lack of planning to launch a universal pension scheme "let down" Dr Cheung, who started researching the scheme in 2001 and was then a social welfare legislator.

The pension scheme was initiated by Hong Kong Social Security Society of which Dr Cheung was a member. The welfare policies study group suggested that part of CSSA, whole sum of fruit money and half of MPF should be allocated to a public funding pool.

"The results of the study showed that if the government were to adopt our suggestion, elders in Hong Kong would have immediately received \$2,500 a month for 50 years," said Dr Cheung.

In response to senior citizens' request, Financial Secretary Mr John Tsang Chun-wah announced a reverse mortgage scheme targeted at the elderly in this year's financial budget.

Under the scheme, the elderly use their properties as collaterals to borrow mortgage loans from banks and receive a certain amount of cash every month while continuing to live in their properties for the rest of their lives.

Eligible borrowers, 60 or above, could choose to receive monthly annuity payments over a fixed period of 10, 15 or 20 years or over their lifespan.

But Mr Mak Hon-kai, chairperson of Hong Kong Association of Senior Citizens which lobbies for the elderly's welfare, said: "The scheme only benefits those who own a flat. I wonder how many needy elders are qualified to join it."

Mr Mak added that elderly property owners might not be able to receive the full monthly payments because banks or mortgage corporations would charge handling fees and insurance.

Mr Chan Wah, 62, who is living with his wife at a 600-square-foot apartment in Cheung Sha Wan, said: "I could earn more by selling my flat. I could use part of the money earned to buy a smaller flat and save the rest."

The mortgage scheme not only disappoints those who do not have their own homes, but also fails to win over the middle class.

EDITED BY HOA PHAM



Mr Erwin Huang sleeps in a cubicle for six days during filming.

(Below) Ms Juju Chan Yuk-wan (left) stays with a new immigrant family.

# Tasting poverty as a show

RTHK's *Rich Mate, Poor Mate* has become a hit

BY JOHN XIAN

Some regard TV reality shows as pointless but one completely changes his attitude to life because of a reality series.

As a listed company's CEO, Mr Erwin Huang had never thought that he would help the impoverished.

During filming of RTHK's *Rich Mate, Poor Mate* in July 2009, he worked as a dustman and lived in a cubicle in Sham Shui Po for six days.

Four months after the programme aired, he launched two projects to offer free netbooks and Internet connections as well as academic tutoring for needy children.

His aim is to bridge the digital gap between rich and poor children in the city. So far, at least 250 children have received his assistance.

Mr Huang said poverty was the result of a vicious cycle in which poor people earned little and lived in despair. As a result, they did not care much about children's education. Their next generation would end up in hardship like them.

"To break this cycle, we need to give children hope," he said.

"Our volunteers, mostly university students, reach the children from time to time and show them we care."

Chinese American model Ms Juju

Chan Yuk-wan was also a participant on the TV show. Staying at a 100-square-foot cubicle with a new immigrant family, she worked as a waitress in a cafe.

After the experience, Ms Chan became a volunteer for the Society for Community Organisation, helping children with their studies.

She went to the centre at least once a week and tutored two primary school girls. She said it was a good way to narrow the gap but the number of volunteers at the centre was far from enough. "There are only four volunteers to take care of about 40 students," she said.

While Mr Huang and Ms Chan were inspired by the reality series, its executive producer Ms Doris Wong Lok-har said it was hard to tell if a TV programme could change a person and the society.

"The media's responsibility is to reveal social phenomena, raise public awareness and provide room for discussions to find a solution," she said.

"The structure of the society, high housing prices and soaring consumer price index leave the poor with no hope."

Among the rich people that the show has invited to live a poor man's life was Mr Michael Tien Puk-sen, founder of G2000 and former chairman of KCR. He

worked as a street sweeper and lived in a bed-space for several days.

The programme has sparked a lot of discussions since it was aired. Critics say the participants are merely seeking publicity because spending a few days to experience poverty is not enough to understand the needs of the poor.

But others supported the idea as participants have to spend much time and effort to live and work in such poor conditions.

SoCO community organiser Ms Sze Lai-shan said such a reality show was necessary as there was not enough care and concern for the poor.

"They are discriminated against. So asking the rich to live as the poor is a good way to reveal their life to the wider community," said Ms Sze.



EDITED BY ALAN KWOK



# Truck drivers team up with dustmen to reduce waste

Pressure on landfills is eased as glass and bins collected by dustmen are taken to the recyclers for free

BY CLAIRE CHU

Regardless of the government's lack of concern for environmental protection, dumper truck drivers have found their way to help reduce garbage.

Among the tons of garbage dumped into landfills every day are recyclable materials. Truckers who are aware of the improper disposal of recyclable materials have found an alternative.

Ms April Lai Mui-ching, project coordinator of Hong Kong Dumper Truck Drivers Association, has been looking for a sustainable way for low-income workers to improve their life and help the recycling industry to thrive.

"I think one can make a living while being environmentally friendly. In fact, many workers are attentive to environmental protection," Ms Lai said.

At first, Ms Lai's team proposed to transport used sand to the government's reclamation sites.

"Making good use of recyclable rubble can ease the burden of landfills," said Ms Lai.

But the plan did not go as she expected: "We are frustrated. The government kept importing sand from elsewhere. They claim that non-recycled sand consolidates faster and speeds up completion of reclamation."

Instead of giving up, her team launched a glass recycling programme under which the association sends truck drivers to collect glass from the public and move them to a local recycling firm.

Apart from transporting the glass, drivers also take care of recycling bins.

"The bins can be very dirty by the time cleaners come. People always put stuff inside the bins that they are not supposed to," said Mr Wong Wah-hing, a hawker control team member.

He frequently interacts with dustmen



*Recycling workers earn very little and often sustain injuries at work.*

and understand their plight: "Their job is harsh and nauseous. Many of them even get injured by frequently lifting bulky items."

On top of the hard work, the recycling workers are paid very little, according to Ms Lai. "I feel sorry for them. A minimum wage at \$28 per hour is still far from acceptable."

She believed that the recycling industry could be encouraged by a reasonable wage because the workers' hard work deserves a more stable income.

"Some workers told me that they were delighted to be recognised by the public for their contribution and meaningful work to the environment. This serves as

great encouragement and drives them to work harder," Ms Lai said.

She urged the government to acknowledge the importance of their jobs and be supportive to their hard work.

Greenpeace campaign manager Ms Gloria Chang Wan-ki agreed that the reduction of waste at source is the key to waste management.

"We should reduce waste with everybody's utmost efforts," she said.

"There is no point in spending billions on constructing an incinerator that is unnecessary. The government's money could be spent properly on sorting waste at source and recycling."

EDITED BY EDWARD MA



# Magicians' money spells

Performance fees could be very high, but they are commercial secrets

BY SIMON YUEN

Cutting a beauty into half or pulling a rabbit out of a hat are common tricks that magicians do.

We cheer for them as they perform those intriguing manoeuvres on stage. But once they are off the stage, these magicians are unlike most of us.

Like all other professions, magicians have to spend time on “vocational training” as well as networking with others. The business has its own set of rules.

“The [exact] amount of our performing fee is always a secret,” said Mr Ip Mong-fung, first runner up of the 7th Hong Kong Close-up Magic Open Contest 2010.

Acting fees vary a lot, depending on performers’ skills. Experienced magicians can get more than \$10,000 by staging a 30-minute long magic shows at shopping malls, company meetings and cocktail parties.

Businesses thrive before festivals. Magicians get many job offers during Christmas. Some give Gospel magic shows, in which a magician conveys messages or interprets stories from the Bible with tricks.

Mr Ip said although the exact performing fee was a commercial secret, magicians would not turn the trade into a cut-throat business by accepting an of-

fer that was far lower than the average fee in the market.

“Every magicians must follow the rules because everyone needs jobs. Otherwise, all of us will suffer at the end,” he added.

Teaching also makes up part of a magician’s income. But again, the fee is always a secret.

Coaching other veteran magicians is another way of teaching. When magicians develop a new set of skills, they may find a mentor to discuss and refine it. Only insiders of the magic field know this way of earning money.

“Of course mentors earn much more than those giving magic classes to laymen,” Mr Ip said. “The purpose of developing a new set of magic is to take part in competitions. Magicians perform unique skills in these occasions.”

International magic conventions provide a platform for magicians to share experiences and compete with each other to further develop their skills.

Competitions for magicians usually have two categories - stage magic and close-up magic.

Stage magic consists of magic tools, music and properties provided by organisers and lighting. The interaction of music, lighting and presentation skills

can enhance the ambience.

Close-up magic includes card or coin tricks. Magicians usually perform for small groups of people.

Famous magicians are often invited to give lectures on specific topics. They can also sell unique tools invented by themselves. One example is the splash bottle, a bottle of champagne that appears after the magician pops a balloon.

Some magicians take a step further by operating shops that sell tools for magicians. From a piece of flash paper or a coin to an empty magic box from which lots of flowers can pop up during a performances, the prices of magic tools range from a few dollars to several thousand dollars.

“Customers are willing to buy magic tools and they have money for that. So we can earn a lot by running magic shops,” said Mr Michael Cheung, shopkeeper of Magicbox, who admits to keen competition from his peers.

Presentation skills and techniques are indispensable qualities of a good magicians. Above all, a professional magician must have a burning passion for perfection that drives him to always find the best way to put on a flawless and entertaining performance.

EDITED BY THOMAS YAU



# Hair studio is after-hour jazz den

Who says salons are just for haircuts, dyes and perms?

BY SAI AUNG THEIN

In a city where most people follow the trends, it is a challenge not to pursue mainstream fashion. But Mr Benky Chan's Visage One hair studio is an exception.

Holed up in a back lane behind Hollywood Road in Central, the premises looks more like an art studio than a hair salon.

"My ideal concept is to tell the society who I am, and I am not particularly thinking about the business part," Mr Chan said.

Working solo, Mr Chan opened the salon eight years ago. He was not sure whether he could make money, but he was confident he could survive, having been a hairdresser for about 20 years.

Mr Chan does not follow the latest haircutting trends, as he sees them as superficial. Instead, he talks to customers and picks hairstyles that suit their face shapes, hair textures and personalities.

But his persistence exhausts him. He thus serves only five customers a day, and they must make appointments in advance.

Mr Mark Davis, an art manager from New Zealand, had been searching for a right haircut until he found Mr Chan two years ago.

"Benky gives me a simple haircut that suits my curly western hair very much," Mr Davis said.

"Places in Hong Kong are busy, but here is quiet and cool."

Every Saturday night, as many as 40 people squeeze into this quiet place as it turns into a hazy and warm music club.

Mr Chan usually invites two to four musicians to play at his hair studio for a three-hour show.

Due to several complaints from neighbours, the show has been resched-

uled to start earlier at 6 pm rather than at 10 pm.

Sitting on the balcony with her friends, Ms Rosalia Leung, a newcomer, said she felt relaxed.

"I feel like home here with all those books, TV set, sofa, and small chairs around," she said.

Mr Jonathan Yip, producer and presenter at RTHK, is attracted by the relaxing music in the studio. "It's very small. I like the environment because you feel you are very close to the musicians," he said.

Musicians like to come, even though they are not paid much. Some of them are professionals while others just come for fun. "They come because it is important that the audience here listen to their music," Mr Chan said.

Jazz guitarist Karissa Muse said this was the best venue she had ever played at. "The audience here is attentive and supportive. They give us good feedback and they like our music," she said.

"In some other places, no matter what you play, people don't appreciate it. They just talk very loudly and sometimes I feel like I am interrupting their conversations."

Mr Nobel Queano, a Filipino acoustic guitarist playing with Ms Muse, said he felt respected during the performance.

Ms Vanessa Chan, who was on her fourth visit, said it was very difficult to find a place like this in the city where popular culture was quite dominant.

Although fewer people come now because of the early start, Mr Chan still hopes he can continue his business and do what he loves.

"I just do the thing I want. Sometimes, not so many people can do what they want. So I'm happy I can do it," he said.



Mr Benky Chan gives Mr Mark Davis a simple haircut.



EDITED BY CATHIE GUO

# Turning veggies bound for landfills into tasty dishes

Reducing food waste is key to reducing waste and prolonging the lifespan of landfills

BY HEIIN LAI

Workers at the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions' Tai Wo centre are enjoying good food - broccoli with mushrooms, carrots with eggs and papaya sweet soup.

But one may never expect these fresh dishes are made from vegetables that were almost in the dustbin.

"They are not rubbish but food," said Ms Tse Sheung-chun, a worker at the centre who collected the vegetables from the Fu Shin Street wet market.

About 600 kilograms of vegetables had been gathered and ready for sorting. Ms Tse, a pioneer of HKCTU's food recycling programme, collects unsold vegetables with three other colleagues every Monday and Wednesday night.

After collecting vegetables from retailers, they cut away the rotten parts and freeze the remainder. In the next morning, workers at the centre will cook them for a good meal.

Launched in 2009, the programme aims to reduce waste by consuming edible vegetable waste and recycling food waste as fertilisers.

"Hong Kong people abandon about one million tons of food waste every year, about one-third of the total waste



Workers collect vegetables from retailers.



A six-dish meal made of unsold vegetables costs just \$10.

in the city," said Ms Zoey Wong Shuk-wai, project officer of the food recycling programme.

"With our landfills rapidly filling up, recycling edible vegetable waste could be a key step in waste reduction.

"Over ten stalls at Fu Shin Street wet market have taken part in the scheme. They give unsold vegetables like lettuce, fruit, cabbage and bean sprout to the centre. Some organic food shops also send their expired or to-be-expired food to the centre."

Approximately 30 per cent of the food collected are cooked and served to the unemployed who attend job training courses at the centre. The menu is different every day. Eggs and bean curd could be added to diversify the dishes.

"I like the meal, especially the soup. The workers make much effort to make it taste good," said Ms Mandy Wong, student of a healthcare training course, who regularly buys a meal there.

Food collected by the centre is also sent to some nursing homes and hostels

for the disabled.

"Edible food should not be wasted," said Mr Chui, owner of Fuka Home for the Disabled, who used to drive and pick up vegetables for his nursing home.

Besides, some remaining ingredients are made into salty and sour vegetables, fruit jam, sauce and canned food, or donated to charities. Even if the food is too bad or rotten, it can still be used as fertilisers for organic farms.

Mrs Chung, owner of a food stall on Fu Shin Street, used to throw away all her unsold vegetables. But now she is happy to help the needy through the scheme and not waste her vegetables.

So far, the scheme has only been practised in Tai Po due to a lack of manpower and funding. Project manager Ms Bella Ip plans to raise funds and invite monthly donations.

"We hope others can give us a hand. This will benefit our community and improve the environment for our next generation," said Ms Ip.

EDITED BY VERA CHEN





# Fashionable recycling

Recycled newspaper is made into purses, handbags and card holders

BY JUDITH KI

**M**ax Wong Mak-shi greets every customer walking into his shop with an introduction of his products.

"All our bags are made of recycled newspaper and other wrappings," said the owner of Recycled.

His products range from tote bags, wallets and card holders to iPad cases, envelope files and caps.

What distinguish them from similar products are their recycled raw materials, complicated weaving handiwork and high-temperature processing for durability enhancement.

Mr Wong, who is in his 30s, used to own a bag factory in Vietnam. He came up with the idea to start a green business three years ago.

"Many businessmen are eager to go green but they are discouraged by the high cost of environmentally friendly products," he said.

He was inspired to use newspaper as the major fabric of his fashion; other recycled raw materials include candy

wrappings, carton drink boxes, rice bags and even tyres.

Some local hotels, newsstands and the Financial Times provide Mr Wong with their unsold newspapers regularly, while Kowloon Dairy and Sunraysia give him misprinted carton drink boxes that are usually discarded.

"This can ensure hygiene and quality of my products as well as a stable supply of raw materials," Mr Wong said.

According to him, it takes almost 20 pages of newspaper to produce an average-sized tote bag.

Every bag is unique as newspaper is randomly aligned during production.

"I'm fascinated by their uniqueness. I felt upset and embarrassed when my bag clashes with others' on the street," said Mr Howard Hau Wai, 28, a customer of the shop. In his hands is a card holder made of recycled newspaper, on which a wedding photo of a local celebrity couple is printed.

An average-sized newspaper tote bag costs \$180.

"Their prices range from less than a hundred to just several hundred dollars," Mr Hau said. "Going green can be affordable too."

Mr Ed Pun Wai-lit, 23, bought a tote bag from the shop too. He was impressed by its interior design.

"The bag is useful and the price is attractive," said Mr Pun. He appreciated the products for their environmentally friendliness, uniqueness and durability.

"It performs perfectly in the rain," he said, adding that he was amazed by the waterproof quality of the products.

Mrs Sue Saunders, 46, from the United Kingdom, supports environmental protection and practises waste separation at home. She had bought a purse made of recycled rice bag from Recycled.

"I care about the environment," she said. "I only buy what I need and don't want to produce unnecessary waste."

She said products of Recycled were exactly what she looked for.

EDITED BY PEARL LIU

# Clones on a tiny scale

The art of visualising one's memories and dreams

BY CECILIA CHAN



*Ms Annie Mok's mini lavender store is scaled-down by 1:12.*

In a wooden shop selling a wide range of lavender-related products including soaps, candles and perfume, bunches of lavender are everywhere. While everything seems to be in good shape, their small sizes reveal the secret.

The mini lavender store is a scaled-down version of the real thing and made by veteran miniature artist Ms Annie Mok, who got the idea on a visit to the lavender fields in Hokkaido, northern Japan, seven years ago.

She found a lavender store there and liked it so much that she decided to make a mini version of it. Since then, the tiny shop has become one of the hallmarks of her Lilliputian world.

Miniatures are models typically

made in a scale of 1:12. Originated in the German royal family in the 16th century, the art has evolved from merely making dollhouses into almost everything.

Usually, petite foodstuff and flowers are made of soft resin clay while the wooden or rocky models are made of a harder clay called "la doll".

Ms Mok says miniatures are not just copies of life, but creations from her memories and dreams. To visualise them with fine and virtual details, she has to conduct research into colour matching and interior design.

She regards keen observation as essential in getting all the details right, especially for flowers.

"Different types of flowers have different characteristics. So different tech-

niques are required to illustrate their blooms," she said. "Roses and orchids are the most difficult."

Miniature art has become very popular in Asia in recent years, especially in Japan and Taiwan. Yet, not many Hong Kong people are familiar with it.

Ms Saphia Cheung Kwan-po has learnt miniature art for six months. She practises every night, no matter how exhausted she is after work.

"I wish I could stay at home to make mini flowers every day," said the 23-year-old full-time financial advisor.

"Life is dull if you just keep working. Making miniatures helps relieve the pressure from my job."

Amateur miniature artist Ms Joy Wong Yan-yan has enjoyed the art for almost 15 years, though her works do not look realistic to some people.

"Of course I am happy when someone appreciates my works. But I won't feel bad if there is none," said Ms Wong.

To Ms Amy Chan, making miniatures is an art closely related to life. She learnt it on her own and has become a full-time miniature teacher for 16 years.

"Miniatures can be based on anything you see in daily life. This is not the same as other handicrafts like weaving cloth," she said.

"Each miniature work has its difficult part. But to make it look realistic is always the ultimate task."



*Ms Annie Mok and her dollhouse.*

EDITED BY ALAN KWOK





# These birds can talk

A parrot can live up to 60 years, so be ready for some serious chattering if you buy one

BY SADIE LO

**L**am Cho-fung is neither a politician nor a movie star. He is not particularly good-looking either. But people cannot take their eyes off him whenever he appears. Yet the real focus is not on him; it is on his parrots.

"Hong Kong people are not familiar with parrots so they are curious when they see the birds," said Mr Lam. "When one stops, others will stop and surround me as well."

The amateur street performer has got very used to being surrounded by people since he started keep parrots two years ago. He often brings along his parrots to perform magic in Mongkok.

Although his parrots are too young to speak, they manage to do some other tricks in the performance. They complete their tasks by raising their legs to greet and picking up the right card.

There has always been a myth about parrots. Do they understand human language or just follow what people do to perform and talk?

Mr Tsang Hing-cheung, chairman of Parrot Tree, believes that parrots have higher intelligence than dogs because of

their ability to learn quickly. He has kept parrots since he was seven.

According to a 30-year research by American scientist Dr Irene Pepperberg, parrots can be as intelligent as a five-year-old child. By comparison, dogs' intelligence is similar to a two-year-old kid only, Dr Stanley Coren, a leading canine researcher at the University of British Columbia found.

Mr Lam says there is not a single way to train parrots and the training techniques applied have to match the character of the bird.

"Parrots which like eating can pick up new skills quicker," he said.

Besides, parrots could learn through peer influence.

"They can learn from each other," Mr Lam said. "If one parrot knows how to do a trick, another will follow too."

Parrot keeper Ms Leung Wai-ping has kept parrots for about eight years. As the secretary of Parrot Tree, she is the main performer at the organisation's functions.

Her parrots could perform about 20 actions, such as tumbling, categorising

things and laughing when you scratch them.

Ms Leung says she obtains knowledge of parrot training from books and foreign websites. She advises others to build trust with their parrots, find out what they love to eat and always be patient to train them.

Local organisations like Parrot Tree and Hong Kong (Int'l) Parrots Association often participate in voluntary functions like Hong Kong Pet Festival.

Parrot owners enjoy meeting with people. "Whether their parrots are doing trapeze, tightrope walking or just some small tricks, they always feel good," chairman Mr Tsang said.

However, parrots are not always in a good mood. Ms Leung explains that noise and environment could affect their performance.

"Some people say it is against the parrot's will to perform tricks like cycling. But I don't think we are violating nature," said Ms Leung.

"Parrots only perform what they like. It's action from their hearts."

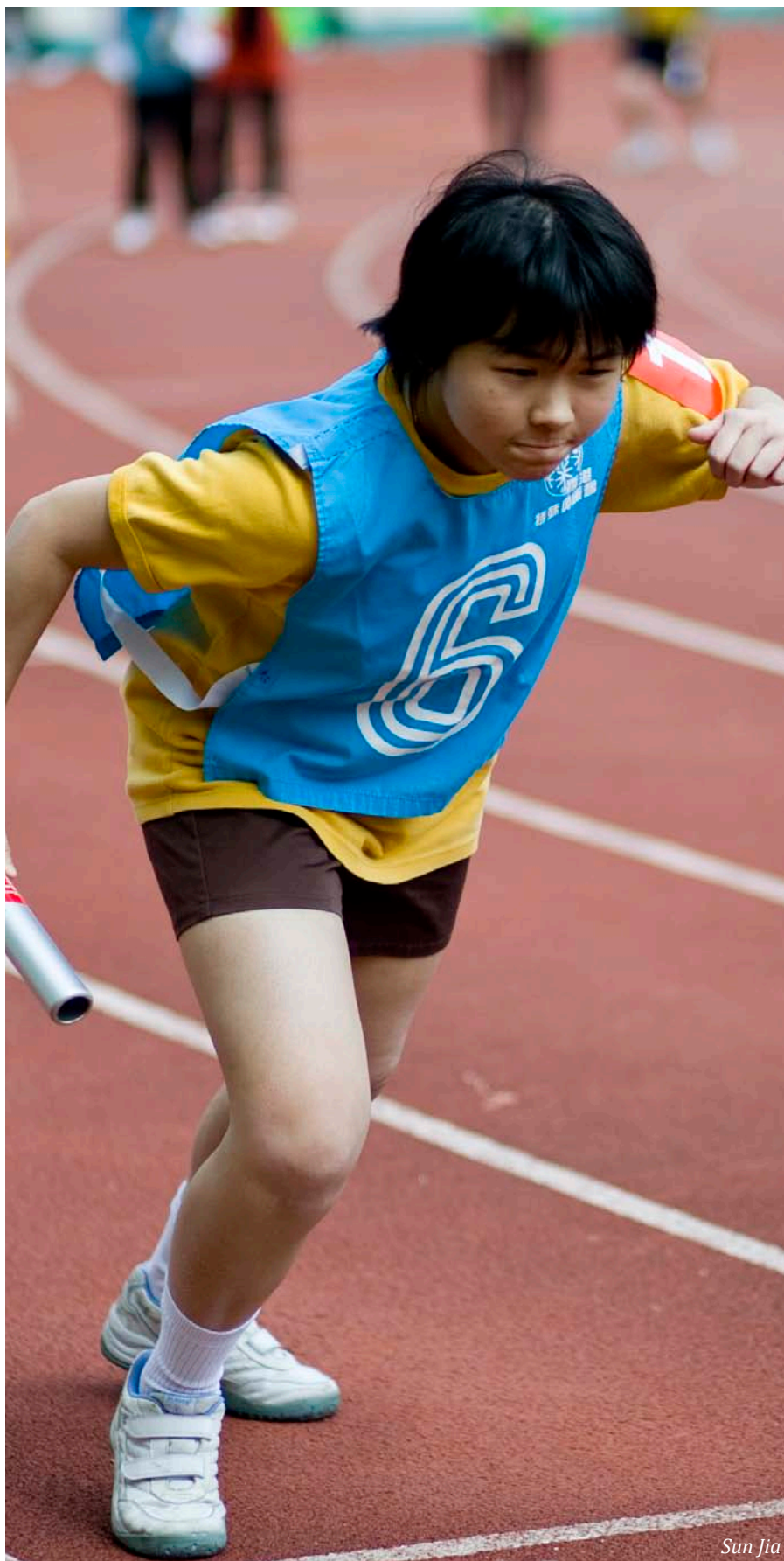
She adds that they have to arrive two hours earlier before the show to let their parrots warm up. If they felt nervous, the show would be cancelled or replaced with other performances.

Ms Leung says many people are attracted by parrots' ability to talk and might buy one without thorough consideration. "But some parrots can live up to 60 years. So think twice before getting a parrot," she says.



*A Galah Cockatoo on its master's hand.*

EDITED BY CARRIE CHENG



Sun Jia



The city's law enforcement agencies will join hands to raise money and awareness for ID athletes in an upcoming event organised by Special Olympics Hong Kong (HKSO).

Mr Lee Hong-sang, senior sports executive at HKSO and Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped says there is a lack of resources and funding for ID athletes.

"We invited seven departments, including ICAC, to join the event and support the elite athletes to travel to Greece for the International Special Olympic Games in the coming summer," he said.

There are 67,000 to 87,000 ID people in Hong Kong according to 2007 figures. The HKSAM host sports competitions for over 40 ID schools in the city.

Mr Lee says their most difficult challenge now is to find qualified coaches.

"We do not have enough resources to train coaches by ourselves, and well-





# Just as good

Special Olympics Hong Kong is more than a competition for the intellectually disabled

BY JENEMY MA, VERONIKA TOMANOVÁ, JACKIE YIN & JASMIN YIU

known coaches may not be willing to teach the ID, especially when they realise that the pay is similar to teaching normal people," said Mr Lee.

"The only way to lessen the problem is to find more volunteers."

HKSAM receives most of its financial aid from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Social Welfare Department. But the subsidy can only cover daily training and competition costs. Therefore the organisation has to find sponsors itself.

They originally promoted their events through the Internet. A committee was set up for programme promotion and to arouse awareness of the ID community.

"Even when our athletes win international competitions, no one knows and no one is concerned about the news because there's no value," said Mr Lee.

He added that it was unfair that the award money was a lot less compared to

normal athletes.

"The government should work for the ID, at least letting the public know their existence," said Mrs Cheung Chow Yim-wan, mother of a 11-year-old ID boy.

Raising an ID kid costs about \$30,000 per month due to various recovery exercises the child must take. This may be a big burden for an ordinary family.

"I really hope the government could help...rather than limiting free education period to the age of 18. It takes more time for these kids to learn," said Mrs Chan Kuai-lan, mother of a 15-year-old boy whose mental retardation condition had worsened from moderate to severe.

Besides the fee, Mrs Chan also worries about her son's future. She says his son could only go to sheltered workshop or Day Activity Centre after graduating from special schools. She hopes the organisation could provide dormitory to ease her family's burden.



## About SO...

- Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1968.
- The biennial event is mainly for people with intellectual disabilities (ID), while the Paralympic Games cater to physically disabled people.
- SO Summer Games 2011 will be held from June 25 to July 4 in Greece.
- Over 7,500 ID athletes from 185 regions will attend the Games and compete in 22 Olympic-type sports.



*Cheung Wai-ling thanks her teacher Mr Yiu for his support and encouragement.*



# Behind the glory

Table tennis player Cheung Wai-ling looks forward to her journey to Athens

Intellectually disabled students can also enjoy a meaningful and pleasant school life like ordinary people by participating in sport.

In Hong Kong, there are a total of 41 schools for children who are intellectually disabled, like Caritas Lok Yan School in Yuen Long, Chi Yun School in Sham Shui Po and Mary Rose School in Kowloon Tong.

Some of them provide training for students who have talent in a particular sport.

Cheung Wai-ling is a 17-year-old student at the Tuen Mun Sun Fai School. She is going to take part in the table tennis double competition in the Special Olympics this summer.

“Cheung is a very good student. She

# Unconditional love

Every footprint on the path of life means a step closer to the top

“Step on ‘one’!” cries a mother standing beside her son. At first glance, they look like any other family. But in his yellowish brown school uniform, the boy is visibly shorter than a normal 11-year-old.

He pants with excitement and sways his head, as if nodding to his mother, while making his steps onto the podium. Bryan Cheung Hau-yan has just won the champion of a 100-metre race in a competition of five.

Bryan is in the final year of the class for children with moderate mental retardation. Everyday, he goes to school like most children. At school, he does sports like running and throwing, and is taught common concepts on pictorial books. After school, his mother Mrs Cheung Chow Yim-wan, a secretary, looks after him with the help of a Filipino maid.

Although Bryan has been attending swimming classes since he was five, it was not because he had the talent. Mrs Cheung enrolled



in the class because she thought exercise could help him maintain normal body function and improve flexibility.

Nowadays she takes Bryan hiking, a challenge for an intellectually disabled child. The journey may take up to five hours, which is twice the time used by a normal person.

“I want to teach my son that

even if we are not perfect, we can make it up with time,” she said. “It also helps build endurance.”

Mrs Cheung sees parental support as crucial for the growth of mentally retarded children. She says parents should bring their disabled children out more often so that the society can get more accustomed to their existence.

“They are no longer awkward if you see them more. The ugly ones can be beautiful,” she said.

Mrs Cheung hopes more sports events like the Special Olympics could be held every year.

“The purpose of these activities is not to compete, but to cultivate a sense of community among them,” Mrs Cheung said. “Their faces light up at the sight of one another.”

The mother looks forward to the day when her son can represent Hong Kong in world games.

“I accept my son the way he is. My world is always colourful, thanks to my son, even though others might see it as gray.”



concentrates well in class and is really hardworking. Besides sport, she also achieves good results in her academic performance," said her teacher Mr Yiu.

"As her teacher for three years, I never had to worry about her studies because she can strike a perfect balance between sport and studies," Mr Yiu added.

Though mentally retarded, these young athletes never give up on themselves. Most of them are very experienced athletes who have taken part in many competitions and won numerous prizes.

Behind glory and medals, there are always sweat and tears. Long hours of training and dedication are the reasons for their achievement.

"I attend training three days a week,

two hours each time," Cheung said.

"I started playing table tennis four years ago. At the beginning, I did not know much about it. But soon I have fallen in love with the sport, so I decided to keep on playing."

During training and competition, they face obstacles that may seem impossible to overcome. But with determination and perseverance, nothing can stand in their way.

On the other hand, there are also memorable and challenging times when they are competing for medals.

"At first, I did not know how to play doubles in table tennis, and I was training and playing at a low grade. I once thought of giving up. But the encouragement from Mr Yiu helped me overcome

these obstacles," Cheung said.

The 17-year-old's most memorable time was in Fuzhou last September when her team achieved great results and got to meet top athletes from China.

For the upcoming Special Olympic World Games in Athens, Mr Yiu has his hopes on Cheung.

"It is a very precious chance and the standard is very high. There are elites from everywhere around the world," said Mr Yiu. "I hope she can try her best and make friends with other players. Their experience can help her improve."

Cheung looks forward to her trip to Athens too. "I am really looking forward to going to Greece. But I just want to concentrate on my training now and try my best," she said.

# Magnitude of velocity

## Coaches and athletes go through hours of training to pick up speed - and medals

Standing by the track, his eyes are nailed on the spots moving on the lanes. This is the man behind the Special Olympics Hong Kong team, who trains athletes and believes the disabled can do something extraordinary.

Mr Kevin Cheung has high expectations on his teams in the 2011 Athens Special Olympics.

"I am happy to see sportsmen become successful champions when they win. They gain more confidence and self-

**"To me, they are both friends and students."**

- Kevin Cheung,  
full-time coach of HKSO team

esteem and I think sports can broaden their horizons," said the patient coach, who rarely shouts on the field.

As the only full-time coach of the team since last September, he is training six boys and two girls for the worldwide competition along with part-time trainer Mr Timothy Tam. They are determined to achieve good results this year.

"I believe sprint is the discipline which could gets us a medal in Athens", said Mr Cheung.

All hopes for a sprint medal in the Games are on the youngest member of the team, Tse Choi-yuk.

The 10-year-old girl is representing Hong Kong in the 100m and 200m sprints in June. Trained by Mr Cheung and Mr Tam, she needs to attend more than eight hours of training per week.

Together with her companion Wong Ka-ho, they never blamed the long training hours.

"I don't think the training is hard and my motivation is to win the competition," said Wong Ka-ho.

But to win, the intellectually disabled athletes need care and trust the most.

"Usually it is difficult to gain people's trust, but the intellectually disabled are different. They trust me and Kelvin very much," said Mr Tam.

Mr Cheung shares his view.

"Sometimes the athletes don't know how to express themselves, so I have to be more patient. To me, they are both friends and students," said Mr Cheung.



*Mr Kevin Cheung is helping the athlete with stretching.*



*Mr Kevin Cheung (left) and Mr Timothy Tam hope Tse Choi-yuk (middle) to get a sprint medal in Athens.*

EDITED BY MINERVA CHENG, ELEVEN LIU, YOYO SUN, & CANDICE WONG



# Healing with medicine and music

A multi-talented doctor performs good deeds around the city

BY GOOSIE CHAN

If you have yet to catch the “Siu Ming Goes to Guangzhou” fever, it is about time you visit Dr David Lee Ka-yan in his clinic, or go to see his live performance on stage.

A pediatrician by day and a sought-after singer by night, Dr Lee has just enough time to catch up on rest before rushing off to make rounds at a private hospital and singing at a show in the evening.

Invitations for performance and interview requests have been flooding in ever since a video of him singing “Siu Ming Goes to Guangzhou” became an instant hit on the Internet last year.

He is surprised that there has been so much positive feedback, but is not complaining even with the extra work load because his dream of becoming a singer has come true.

“Everyone has dreams, especially young people. My dream was to become a singer,” said Dr Lee.

He has always loved singing and joined his first singing competition in 1969 when he was in secondary school. It was organised by Sing Tao Daily. He lost the contest but saw the experience as a learning process.

Switching his attention back to

school, Dr Lee enrolled in the University of Hong Kong to study medicine.

“At that time I had to be down-to-earth and earn a living,” said Dr Lee.

Throughout the years, he was a dedicated doctor, but later decided to join Hong Kong St. John Ambulance as a tutor and participate in other kinds of community services.

Dr Lee made friends from all walks of life. This allowed him to come across a chance to shine.

In 1993, one of Dr Lee’s friends work-

**“Set realistic goals,  
do your day job and  
work on your dreams.”**

- Dr David Lee Ka-yan

ing at TVB suggested he sing for a music video for children.

He then started appearing on TV from time to time but did not succeed to be a singer.

In 2001, Dr Lee’s friend, famous composer Mr Lai Wai-yin, wrote a song for him called “Siu Ming Takes a Train”, which marked the beginning of the “Siu Ming” series.

It was inspired by a well-known chil-

dren’s game “scissors, paper, stone”.

The feedback was good, according to Dr Lee. He asked for more “Siu Ming” songs from Mr Lai, who declined.

Dr Lee waited patiently for the right time to come. In 2009, just before the East Asian Games in Guangzhou, he tried to approach Mr Lai again. This led to the creation of “Siu Ming Goes to Guangzhou”.

Instead of making money from his newfound career, Dr Lee has donated all earnings from his shows to charities and sponsoring community activities.

The advice he has for the younger generation is to hold on to their dreams, even if their first attempts to realise them end in failure.

“Just finish every job you get at the moment, give it your best and be grateful to criticism,” said Dr Lee.

He hopes new ‘Siu Ming’ songs will be composed soon so that eager fans and charities will all benefit.

“Take things slowly, set realistic goals, do your day job and work on your dreams,” said the doctor who has successfully pursued two careers, as he put on his white coat to attend to his clinical duties.

EDITED BY JOHN A.L. NICOLAS



# Charcoal heating up the city

Hong Kong's first local dance group strut their stuff

BY GINA NG

**H**ong Kong's saturated music market has not prevented young artistes from emerging.

Dressed uniformly in tight black-and-white suits, newcomers Charcoal are eager to share their bittersweet first taste of life in the industry as a dance group.

Group members Tszho Chan, Davi Cheung, Nick Chong, Cwa Li and Bevis Wong got together last year.

Apart from being good dancers, they are also talented musicians who can play the guitar and piano as well as compose.

Aged between 20 and 23, members of Charcoal are seen as mimicking popular South Korean boy bands and dance groups such as SS501 and Super Junior.

"We wanted to create a cold image and we didn't expect people would define us that way. That's an extra, but we did conduct some research by watching the performances of Korean boy bands," Davi admits.

Charcoal's first single, *Private Party*, got on a radio station's top-20 chart. Their more recent song *Pulse* has also gained positive feedback.



*Charcoal power: (Left to right) Nick Chong, Tszho Chan, Cwa Li and Davi Cheung.*

"Inspiration comes from my personal experiences, while others' comments also play a part," said Nick, who wrote *Private Party*.

Despite the heavily commercialised nature of Hong Kong's music industry, Charcoal believe their company is giving them a high level of freedom in developing their own style and genre.

They thought outsiders have a lot of misunderstandings about the entertainment business. In fact, everybody in it has to put in extra effort just to achieve what others see as routine.

"A few minutes of performance may take one or two months of training as we have to dance. All of us have to move at the same angle," said Davi.

"Success doesn't come easily. It may take five or ten years to become a successful artiste and gain reputation among the audience," said Tszho.

Artiste may be the dream job for many, but the boys said people should understand the sacrifice involved.

"We all had part-time jobs before because we had to train and work at the same time. It was not only hard to us,

but to our families as well," said Davi.

They also moan about the amount of money they have to spend on skin-care products, clothing and food.

"Before we knew each other, I thought it would be ideal to work in this industry and that I could earn a lot of money," said Davi.

"But after I have joined the industry, I have found that it's really hard and we are under a lot of pressure."

Tszho said his family seldom talked about his work. "But it's great to hear them say they would support me no matter what," he said.

The boys have their critics, but have already learned to let go.

"Sometimes I read malicious comments about us, but I have learned to control my emotions and wouldn't let them affect me. We would discuss those constructive criticisms and constantly strive to improve," said Cwa.

Ms Nicole Lee, a local pop music fanatic, said she preferred Korean boy bands, both in terms of appearance and music style.

"Korean groups dance much better and their songs are well composed. In Hong Kong, dance groups seldom become well-known," she said.

Ms Lee added that Hong Kong's market for local music was too small and music fans often prefer solo singers to groups.

Like many artistes in the industry, the Charcoal boys have a common dream.

"We hope we can perform at Hong Kong Coliseum within three years," the boys said.



*Charcoal say they are not mimicing their Korean counterparts, but learning from them.*

EDITED BY ANDY AU YEUNG

# Believer is achiever

Sherman Chung once almost lost her voice but she goes against all odds to pursue singing

BY HEIIN LAI

Humming one of her new songs, the 26-year-old artiste is early and stands alone in the interview room. “I always stand to the side quietly and work diligently,” says Ms Sherman Chung Shu-man.

Ever since primary school, Ms Chung has been in love with music. She learned to play the piano at the tender age of four under the influence of her mother, who is also an artiste.

Standing out in a crowd was never her strength although she did have outstanding results on musical performances. Ms Chung’s persistence paid off in 2005 when she won her first ever competition - the Emperor Entertainment Group Singing Contest.

EEG signed her on as their artist and this contract was a dream come true.

Pursuing this career meant Ms Chung had to quit her music degree studies in the US. But success did not follow immediately. A vocal cord polyp prevented her from singing in 2006 and it took a whole year to recover.

She describes this as the gloomiest period in her life, as if her soul was gone: “I couldn’t see a future ahead. My self-esteem dropped to the lowest point.”

“I didn’t talk or go out. I even hated singing,” says Ms Chung.

In 2007, she finally released her first album “Good Girl” and won the best female newcomer title from several awards in the industry. Her music career peaked in 2009 when “A Letter To Myself” became a hit song.

But awards are not what Ms Chung wants. She has plans and is determined



*Over the years, Ms Chung has learnt to let go for the ups and downs in her career.*

to make them happen.

“I know what I’m striving for. Everyone should have plans in their lives and to achieve them step by step.”

Her most recent target is to hold a mini concert. Defining her own music style is also important to the artiste.

“I am not living for others. If I did, I could never produce good work that represents me,” she says. Such confidence helps Ms Chung stand strong against all the critiques hurled at her, typical in Hong Kong’s music industry.

The key is also to mind one’s own business. She never tries to compare her work with others: “Being jealous of others won’t get you anywhere. And it doesn’t bring benefits either.”

Like everyone else, there have been ups and downs in her career. As a newcomer she used to be depressed every time she performed badly. Over the years Ms Chung has learnt to let go, partly due to the support of Christianity.

“Bad things happen in life and it’s inevitable,” she says. “It just depends on what kind of approach you take to overcome them.”

Family support is also essential to Ms Chung. Her parents did not object to her career choice and have been supportive even though she abruptly ended her studies. Her strict father always texts and calls her while her mum cooks and writes her meaningful sentences.

With her parents aging, Ms Chung has to start planning for her future but in the meantime she will continue to pursue music.

One of her favourite mottos is from “A Letter To Myself” — Forget the past and keep going forward towards your goal. Ms Chung hopes this can encourage youngsters who are lost.

“Don’t assume failure right away. Believers are achievers,” says Ms Chung, “Never give up and you will succeed.”

EDITED BY INES NARVAEZ



# Just good music

No fancy leaflets, no time limit  
but just a show for your soul

BY LOLA AYANBUNMI

School kids, trendy youngsters and older faces watch intensely the blind lady singing traditional opera music against the backdrop of a tree swaying in the Wan Chai breeze.

The set then changes to an experimental fusion of techno and electronica, while a chef cooks next to the DJ. Next a Canadian rock band will storm on stage, before the man behind this mishmash of visual and audio delight picks up his violin and plays with an energetic, local



Mr Daniel Yeung dancing in a sheer white outfit uses the whole area as his stage.

rock band.

Thanks to Mr Kung Chi-shing, all can enjoy monthly free shows outside the Hong Kong Art Centre. The classically trained violinist and social event organiser is a man of presence. His curtain of thick grey hair sways as he talks about a passion for diversifying music.

"I like the fact that even the acts that play at my events will be opened up to different types of music," said Mr Kung.

The show was a visual delight - performance dancer Mr Daniel Yeung Chun-kong teamed up with electronic musician and audio-visual artist Mr Choi Sai-ho.

Leaping across roads and obstacles around him, Mr Yeung used the whole area as his stage while showing off his toned body in a sheer white outfit. His body and music intertwined effortlessly.

At first, the audience was not convinced that such sultry performance dance would work with harsh, techno music. But the set had the audience transfixed - unable to take their eyes away from the spectacle in front.

The outdoor setting is refreshing. Not only because of the fresh air but also because of the freedom it gives. People come and go as they please and there are no restrictions on beer and cigarettes. The open space helps diffuse the volume from clashing drums or electric guitars.

"Having these shows outside, rather than in a venue, I'm able to get interna-

tional acts without all the red tape."

To him, "Good music is good music", and it doesn't matter where it was, Mr Kung said in his Sheung Wan studio.

Mr Kung spent a lot of time in the US before returning to Hong Kong in 1986. Coming from an academic classical background, the artist ended up getting dissatisfied with being stuck in a box.

His inspiration for these shows comes

**"I'm able to get  
international acts  
without all the red tape".**

- Mr Kung Chi-shing, organiser

from the need to find his own way: "So for the past 25 years I've just kept on experimenting."

Wan Chai is not the only location Mr Kung puts on his outdoor shows. His eyes light up when he talks about the shows he managed to put on in West Kowloon.

The concerts he arranged for Choi Yuen Village proved popular and, according to him, was a way to get people pay attention to the village situation.

"If I get 30 bands to play then people will come because of those bands and hopefully learn about the situation along the way".

EDITED BY DAISY ZHONG

# A snapshot of accessibility

BY CHONG CHAN YAU

In January, there was a press conference held to report on a study on transportation facilities for people with disabilities.

An invited guest was absent. He was Law Wai Cheung, popularly known as Cheung Jai, a representative of Direction, an association representing people with quadriplegic disability.

As it turned out, Cheung Jai was stuck at an MTR station when the machine transporting him on his wheelchair down the staircase stopped midway. He waited for hours before maintenance people succeeded in the rescue.

The press conference was supported with a live and compelling case, highlighting the poignancy of accessibility in our city. Cheung Jai was helpless, angry and frustrated.

Fortunately or unfortunately Cheung Jai and many others have learned to live with difficulties of this kind. Their travel plans have built in many inaccessible features of our community.

Wheelchair users have to do a lot of planning ahead. They have to find out whether the restaurants or cinemas or

theatres are accessible. Their plans involve going to a restaurant through a cargo lift, meandering through a maze of secret paths to find an entrance with a ram and soliciting the support of friends or guards for lifting the wheelchairs.

After identifying the entrances, exits and routes, the experienced wheelchair traveller needs to consider the most important facility - the accessible washroom, its location, whether it is locked and where you can find the key.

Why are there so many hazards? The root cause is that our city is not designed for all citizens. The first chief executive of MTR made a classic statement that the MTR was designed for the majority of travellers who can handle fast moving transportation.

This policy was changed as a result of advocacy of the disability rights movement. Over the years, facilities have been gradually built to rectify the physical barriers. There are guide paths for blind persons, audible signals at escalators, and lifts in new lines.

Stations at the old lines have to be equipped with a special machine to con-

vey wheelchairs and their users down a slippery staircase. These machines are aptly called “monster machines”. Organisations for blind people are calling for the construction of trackside walls and it takes MTR years to do so.

If the MTR was designed for all, not only the majority who can handle fast transportation, the effort to add these facilities would not have been necessary. Modification is always costly and ineffective. That’s why the concept of universal design is important.

The Design Manual published by the government to guide constructions in Hong Kong has therefore been a battleground for advocates of accessibility.

The latest version, Design Manual 2008, contains the desired goals of campaigners and users. Unfortunately, nobody is required to modify existing buildings that require continued effort.

The Equal Opportunity Commission published a study of governmental and public places in June last year. The report identified over 3,000 inaccessible premises. It is gratifying that the government made a positive response and promised to renovate the premises so identified within the two years. This is a major step forward in making Hong Kong accessible.

Compared with many cities in other parts of the world, Hong Kong is a much accessible city.

The accessibility movement in Hong Kong is promoted by several stakeholders. The core is people with disabilities themselves. They dare to challenge the obstacles on a daily basis through their refusal to stay at home. They have formed advocacy groups to champion their causes.

Organisations providing services to disabled people are also close allies. Open-minded management at public transportation systems like MTR and government officials have heeded the call and responded positively.

Next time when you invite a disabled friend out for dinners and movies, don’t worry about wheelchairs. There are more accessible venues. And the more the customers demand it, the more changes will happen.



**Mr Chong Chan-yau is Hong Kong Blind Union’s president, vice-chairman of the Joint Council for Physically and Mentally Handicapped, and convener of the Alliance for half-fare in Transport.**



# Japanese management of deadly tremor offers valuable lessons to all

BY EDWARD MA

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that hit the Tohoku region of Japan on March 11 destroyed more than 6,000 houses and killed more than 10,000 people. The quake has also damaged a nuclear power plant in Fukushima, leading to a radiation fallout.

For we lucky ones in earthquake-free Hong Kong, how the Japanese have calmly handled the aftermath of the series of disasters should offer us a valuable lesson in crisis management.

The media in Japan has been very professional. As Japan's public service broadcaster, NHK has carried out the media's most important function - to inform the public - properly.

Right after the quake, NHK quickly responded by showing live footages taken from helicopters of Sendai, the prefecture closest to the epicentre.

Their reports were not sensational. Instead they kept citizens informed of the government's announcements and useful information about rescue and affected regions.

A news anchor who was shocked by the quake and whose voice was trem-

bling tried her best to calm down and presented vital announcements and reports to the public.

Japanese media understand well that they play a crucial roles in times of disasters. Not only journalists, but the entire Japanese community has been disciplined and civilised in coping with the devastation.

Japanese telecommunication service provider SoftBank made all SMS messages sent from SoftBank mobile phones inside Japan free of charge for one week after the quake.

Google Japan has been helping to find and track victims by allowing people at shelters to upload lists of names to message boards with their mobile phones.

Electronics retailing chain Bic Camera provided mobile-phone battery chargers for free. Vending machines in stricken areas also offered free beverages to victims.

Female singer Utada Hikaru posted messages on social networking sites to raise international attention and asked foreign friends to listen to NHK radio for latest quake news in multi-languages.

The united spirit of the Japanese and

their professional conduct in dealing with the unprecedented catastrophe has won worldwide acclaim.

By contrast, some unscrupulous businessmen in Hong Kong were pre-occupied with reaping extra profits by raising the prices of imported baby milk powder from Japan. Others responded to unfounded rumours about eating salt as an antidote to radiation by increasing the price of salt many folds.

Heaven will always leave a door open. One should reconsider the relationship between mankind and the planet.

Earthquakes, floods, volcanic explosions, super-typhoons, blizzards and droughts killed at least a quarter million people last year, causing 2010 to be the deadliest year in half a century.

Natural disasters are just like complaints and warnings against our wanton destruction of the environment. If we don't stop, powerful mother Earth will strike back.

Always remember we are only one of the living creatures on Earth and are not superior to any others. But do treasure your loved ones as we never know what's going to happen next.

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Shop B2, G/F, Mei Sun Building, 4-20 Kau Hui Chik Street, Tai Po





# Trying to do their best

Lack of practice venues and resources are hampering district football teams' efforts to raise their game

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY JACK AUNG MIN KHIN  
EDITED BY MINNIE LI

Although the government was eager to bid for the right to host the Asian Games in 2023, pledging to pour billions into sports facilities and support for athletes, local football teams still struggle for financial assistance and suitable practice venues.

At the Kwong Fuk football ground in Tai Po, players are warming up and getting ready for a match. The team from the Tai Po Football Club has been gaining fame and support because of its stellar performance in the local league. But players complain that the team's resources remain limited and that is affecting their training and efforts to further improve their skills.

"As you see, we can only practise two hours a day because we are sharing the ground with other teams," said chief coach Mr Andy Cheung Po-chun.

Even with the government's proposal to spend \$15 million to upgrade sports venues, the team says this is not the right way to develop sports in the city.





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