Staff and families share in sport days’ fun

For CityU staff members who love sports, the annual Aquatic Meet and Athletic Meet represent two unmissable days on the University social calendar. Not only do they offer a chance for students and staff to showcase their sporting talent, they are simply great fun.

To encourage more staff members to participate and share with their families the joy of competing, the University this year included additional events for family members of staff, to complement the individual student and staff relays at both the swimming and athletics days.

Mr Lau Wai-ho, who works for Student Development Services, and his 11-year-old daughter Lau Hoi-ching, took part in the Aquatic Meet on 22 September. They took home the championship in the 2x50m relay event for staff and families.

This was the first time Hoi-ching, who has been swimming for several years, had taken part in a race together with her father. In addition to the relay victory, she was third-placed in the 50m freestyle event for girls under 12.

Mr Lau has worked for CityU for many years and participated in the first Aquatic Meet ever staged, more than a decade ago. “I’m happy to be able to take part in the event with my family,” he said. “My wife and my little son also came to cheer for us. My whole family enjoyed a wonderful family day on the campus.”

Jocelyn Liu Yin-wai put up a brilliant performance at the Aquatic Meet, winning the 50m freestyle final for girls aged under 15 in record time. Yin-wai’s mother Ms Paulette Lau Pui-yin, who works at the Finance Office, was a big fan of the Aquatic Meet and hoped the University could host more activities for colleagues and their children.

While it is gratifying to win medals, Ms Wendy Leung Chun-wo, who works at the Department of Biology and Chemistry, said being able to compete was already a worthy achievement. “I have taken part in both the Aquatic and Athletic Meets,” she said. “Although I have not won any medals, I was so proud of myself when I finished the event and achieved my target.”

Mrs Dorothy Davies, Associate Director of Student Development Services, said the University has added more events for staff and their families to encourage staff members to exercise more, pursue a healthy life and enjoy activities with their families.

“The events for staff and families have become more and more popular in recent years,” she said. “Many colleagues would bring along their entire family to take part. Through such sporting activities, we wish to provide an opportunity for staff members and their families to have fun together.”

The Aquatic Meet has been running for 17 years. The 14th Athletic Meet was held at the Joint Sports Centre at Renfrew Road on 7 October.

By Zoe Tsang
一個語言愛好者的孜孜追求
Story of a language lover’s pursuit

文：陳穐穎 代寫

D r. Seen Caesar LUN, of the Department of Chinese, Translation & Linguistics (CTL), is an unusual person in many ways.

Although Caesar is very western in his behaviour as well as diet, deep at heart he believes the Confucian ethical ideal of “cultivating oneself and administering one’s family affairs well before one can govern a kingdom and rule the world.”

He was born in Nanjing, China, but his family is actually from Huanan Province. He came to Hong Kong as a child, went to study in the US after matriculation and got his BA and MA in linguistics at the University of Texas, before he finally returned to Hong Kong in 1986 to teach. His teaching and research interests cover a wide range of areas, from linguistics, contrastive grammar and natural language processing to lexicographical studies in Cantonese, Putonghua and English.

His curiosity about languages started when Caesar followed his parents to Hong Kong. He studied at Kiangsu & Chekiang Primary School and lived among circles of friends who spoke different languages. Exposure to various languages and regional dialects triggered an interest in languages that grew as he got into secondary school. He learned French at Alliance Francaise and even set up a Language Society in school, hoping to promote foreign language studies and advocate reform of the Chinese language from traditional to simplified characters and then to Romanization.

Caesar’s dream of language reform was brought to reality when he was admitted to the University of Texas in Austin. “My professor told me language reform was not the linguist’s responsibility but rather a politician’s job.” But Caesar’s spirits were not dampened one iota. He spent the next six years studying for his BA and MA in linguistics, in spite of the grim stories he had heard of fellow Hong Kong students with similar degrees ending up running local Chinese restaurants or changing major to business studies.

“I like languages and nothing is better than doing something you like,” said Caesar, paraphrasing a saying from Lun Yu (Anabasis of Confucius): “Knowing it is not as good as loving it; loving it is not as good as delighting in it.”

Caesar didn’t end up running restaurants or changing majors. He returned to Hong Kong, where he found ample opportunity to indulge himself in his lifelong passion, teaching linguistics, spearheading research into the Romanization of Cantonese, organizing reading courses, and designing computer-assisted language learning software and application programmes for using languages. At the same time, he studied for and obtained his PhD in linguistics, which he gained from the University of Hong Kong in 2005.

On top of his academic pursuits, Caesar also delights in penning verses about his observations and comments on current events and his philosophy of life, regularly posting the compositions on the whiteboard in the CTL corridor, named Lun’s Words, rhyming with Lun Yu (The Anabasis of Confucius), which has been constantly updated for years. The most recent piece voices his remedy for life’s self-constituted worries and concerns.

By Longyen Chen

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Story of a language lover’s pursuit

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By Longyen Chen
A beautiful garden refreshes one's spirit, much as music calms one's mind. Many CityU colleagues love to stroll the Chinese Garden, breathing the aromatic mist of fresh air and green grass before starting their working day. The quality of this elegant garden can be attributed to the behind-the-scenes efforts of the Landscape Services Team of the Facilities Management Office (FMO).

While much of the actual labour, such as watering, mowing, fertilising and pest control, is performed by a team of contractors, the Landscape Services Team is responsible for managing and overseeing the maintenance of the landscape on campus and around staff and students residences.

Mr. Chan Yuen-choi, a senior artist with more than 10 years service at CityU, said: “Trimming the plants, especially the trees, requires a lot of knowledge. We need to attend to the growth of the plants for their health but also try to take into account the aesthetics. Achieving the right balance is the challenge.”

The decision as to which flower seeds to select is another area of specialty knowledge.

“Our fellow workers decide which seeds to plant according to the season. Some of the criteria might include the beauty of the flower, whether it blooms all year round or whether it is resistant to different weather conditions,” Mr. Chan said.

Planning is important, as we order flowers in advance because they need time to grow. For example, we have now ordered the flower seeds for this winter.

“As for special events as the Congregation, we even order three months in advance and plant flowers with bright colours to enhance the photographic opportunities,” said Mr. Thomas Wong Yin-sang, assistant facilities manager of FMO.

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Environmental concerns also weigh heavily on the department’s operation.

“We began purchasing environmentally friendly fertilisers made of natural ingredients as early as four or five years ago from the Environmental Protection Department,” said Mr. Wong.

On the day he spoke to Linkage, Mr. Chak Hing-wong, artist of FMO, was planning to visit the New Territories to pick orchids.

“Now and then, we go personally to the flower fields to pick flowers and ensure the superiority of the seeds purchased,” he said.

So, what is the source of the most pride to the Gardening Team?

“The CityU Logo formed by red-leaved plants in the University Circle,” Mr. Wong answered. “We spent a lot of thought and effort on its cultivation and maintenance. That is why it is so vivid and glowing!”

When asked how colleagues could best assist with their operations, Mr. Chak said, “We would simply be satisfied if colleagues would pay more attention to the campus plants.”

By Je Kam
SRO was established this month as an independent unit following a reorganisation of Student Development Services aimed at allocating resources in a more effective way.

The daily routine of SRO colleagues managing includes the facilities, educating students about life and conducting the entry formalities. They would also have to respond to the event in an emergency, so they will team up with the Resident Masters and Tutors and all the other supportive personnel to attend to the students’ daily needs.

“It is the first time away from home for many of the students. They invariably encounter difficulties from time to time, so we will try our best to establish a close relationship with the students and help them adapt to campus life as smoothly as possible,” said Ms Rebecca Chan Po-yyu, Director of SRO.

“In fact, SRO is like a large supermarket providing diversified services. The students can seek help whenever and for whatever they need. We will try our best to make the necessary arrangements for them,” said Miss Esther Lee Tak-fun, Supervisor Executive Officer of SRO.

SRO also holds inter-ethnic events to encourage students from the different hall councils to acquaint themselves with each other. For example, the Joint-hall Mid-Autumn Festival celebration allowed the students from different regions to have fun together and enjoy a cheerful night.

“Our residence halls receive about 30 non-local students. By organising events such as the Joint-hall Mid-Autumn Festival celebration, SRO encourages the students to understand other cultures, while trying to make them feel at home so as to increase their sense of belonging to the University,” said Ms Chan.

The colleagues of SRO, with their devotion and enthusiasm, hope to create a memorable and happy residence life for the students and add more flavour and colour to their university life.