A Morrisonian Passion to Serve

“We started with a mentoring relationship but ended up as friends!”

These are Ryan Li’s reflections on his mentorship role over the past 10 months. A Morrisonian from the Mainland, he joined the “Child Mentorship Scheme” organised by the Society for Community Organisation (SoCO) (香港社區組織聯盟), a not-for-profit organisation.

Last April, a group of Morrison Hall students participated in the mentorship scheme with the aim of providing children in Shamshuipo with opportunities for social exposure and development. Volunteer students were trained by qualified social workers as mentors and then matched with mentees aged from six to eighteen on a one-to-one basis.

Given the fact that most of the students were first-time mentors, Dr Billy Hau (會鍾健), BSc 1991; MSc (EnvMan) 1994; PhD 2003, Warden of Morrison Hall, intentionally paired each of the mentors, encouraging peer support. This strategy turned out to be very successful.

The rapport and camaraderie amongst mentors played an important role during the initial stages of the scheme when their relations with mentees occasionally encountered a challenging block.

“At first, mentees were not willing to express themselves and even avoided communication with us,” said Tony Hung (洪家龍), another student mentor. “We would try different ways to fill the gap, like playing basketball, watching films or offering tutorials. And, our relations improved bit by bit. But, it was not until the summer camp that a breakthrough came about in our relations.”

The two-day overnight summer camp was held last July with the full support of Morrison Hall. Mentees and their family members were invited to stay with student mentors at the Hall where they played, shared and dined together.

Relations have improved to a point where mentors now keep in touch with their mentees regularly by phone, email or face to face.

“We helped to organise the camp so that the mentees would have a chance to visit our University, the Hall, meet people from different backgrounds, and widen their social exposure,” said Billy. “And, at the same time, this was a good occasion to introduce the project to other students in the Hall.”

Being mentors for almost a year, the students admitted that their communication skills have improved not only with mentees but also with people of different ages.

The scheme provided them with a chance to re-visit their teenage years when they too, like their mentees, also hungered for true friendships and new things.

“We were aware that each family had hidden and non-apparent difficulties which were beyond our ability to handle. These we could only report to the social worker, but as mentors we were able to do much more than we thought possible.”

“Simply serving as a role model to these children could be effective,” said Ali Tang (唐雅麗), the coordinator of the scheme.

“I am proud and happy to be a mentor,” Billy said. “It is my first time talking to the terry”.

It has now been almost a year since the partnership’s inception. As of January 2008, thirty Morrisonians have participated and become mentors, among them four have become alumni during this period.

“It is our goal to continue the scheme and develop it into a sustainable project of Morrison Hall. To achieve the goal, we need to increase the students’ participation rate and solicit more support from alumni and society,” emphasised Billy.

“We are like sisters!” Connie Chau (許惠汶) and WKC Tsui (徐希) and their mentees Yin-sing and Yin-yee, enjoyed a sunny morning at the beach.

A HKU is no longer a stranger to the children of the “Child Mentorship Scheme”. It represents a dream that can become reality. The summer camp saw mentees and their families staying at Morrison Hall where they played basketball games, visited the campus and enjoyed their first dinner at HKU.

“We like this!” Annie Tsang (鍾芷韻) and Eric Lau (劉哲) and their mentees (from left) Vic, Nicholas and Ka-shun visited the Lily Pond.

Last summer, about thirty young volunteers from Hong Kong community associations participated in the “Child Mentorship Scheme”. The scheme was aimed at providing children in Shamshuipo with opportunities for social exposure and development. Volunteer students were trained by qualified social workers as mentors and then matched with mentees aged from six to eighteen on a one-to-one basis.

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去年，約三十多位熱心的香港社區協進學生參加了「香港社區組織聯盟」的“一對一，師徒計劃”。他們與長者們住在一起，有共兩周的時間跟隨長者學會生活。

同學們曾經和社區協會社工的訓練後，便被安排返回社區。短短十個月內，經歷豐富，令他們從被社區認同的整體感覺到，當他們離開社區後，仍然輩於社區的關係。同學們經歷了不少社會的關係，學會和長者建立友誼。

同學們接受了新的課程，並學習到如何處理社區事務。同學們已經認識了香港社區的多樣性，並且開始了解社區事務的複雜性。同學們習慣了社區的事物，學會如何和社區つな結。同學們的關係，使他們有機會認識社區的事物，認識社區的問題。
從納米比亞做起……

從小我已經有一個奇妙的目標：我要到非洲去！可能是從
相片、影片中，看到非洲人的生活點滴，希望可以親身接觸他
們，體驗他們的生活。

直至三零年代末期，我接觸了國際志工計劃（Raleigh Interna
tional Hong Kong），讓我明白可以應用於發展中國家的捐款，例如開創、維持 /
維持維修學校等，等等，來自世界各地的對貧困、環境及發展
現象的關懷、實踐和實驗，都有助於我們成長

經過一年的工作anford
開張在二零零零年三月廿六日出
發，目的地是位於非洲南部的納米比
亞Nambia。

兩大考驗

廿五歲的我，是五十多個志工中年紀最小的，當中已有
許多人來自英國、荷蘭及其他西方國，都曾在非洲
居住或擔任，都有點經驗。對我來說，這擔心是
未來的一大考驗。

另一考驗是當初接觸非洲人的文化。他們是一個十分熱情友好的民族，笑口常
開，談吐簡潔，沒有工作，沒有試吃，仍是開心地笑，他們生活簡易、
風趣、熱情，這就是Africa。對我來說，這是我第一次接觸，如果他們說「試吃」
了，那是我要準備兩個小時，如果說「試吃」或「試吃」，那就要準備一個小時！

學會珍惜

這次我參加了「過來者會」和「社區服務」兩個項目。

「過來者會」的目標是在納米比亞西部預備營，背運脊杖
步行24公里，走過沙漠、草原、荒野，於途中在大西洋
對岸的Skeleton Coast，是荒涼的背運，炙熱的天氣，
一路走，一隊有數十個背運進入我的耳朵，嘶嘶，銀色
井口，沒有印記的機會，食物也多不夠（為減輕裝備的重
量），這是前所未有的艱難——學會珍惜。

「社區服務」的目標是在社區服務，包括營造、農業
等，進一步接觸社區服務。途中會有數十個志工
來賓，能夠與社區居民接觸，從中學到一些生活
智慧。這是一個非常特別的機會，令我對團隊精神有更
新的體會。

赤腳小孩

另一個項目是社區服務，我與另一人到納米比亞北部的一個村落進駐一年
學校。學校由我、及永遠的護理師建立，因水壩的破損，學生每日都不幸無法
就讀。除此之外，非常動人的是「學潮」——學生沒有書籍（太貴了！），在沙地
上寫字，上學

成長歷程

同年，五月十七日，我回到香港。

離開前，我看到一個非常特別的場景：

「Gap year」的概念在美國已經普及，學生在中學和大
學之間，大學和工作之間，工作了一段時間後，他們會
停一停，用一年時間做其他事情，如到國外旅行傳統，
或社區服務等，組寫自己靈魂思考的方向。學
學會珍惜，貴重於任何事情。學校生活非常值得珍貴。

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Ghana. Young volunteers come from various countries and participate in developing their leadership, endurance and
team spirit. After two years of preparation, I finally embarked
on my journey of discovery in March of 2007.

My choice, Nambia...

Full English translation:
http://www.hku.hk/convocat/newsletter/08Spring/index.html