

Mentors moulding minds

With its perils and pitfalls, youth can be a turbulent, troubling period for anyone. That's why two quantity surveyors are volunteering some of their own free time to give youngsters a helping hand in blossoming into mature and responsible young adults.

Wilson Lau

Photo: SCMP and interviewees



Miss Sandy Tam of BGCA, Sr Joe Wu and his mentee Heung Hang-tai, Miss Wong Wai-yin Stephanie of BGCA, Sr Oky Chan and her mentee Shek Hiu-tung (from left to right) share their stories and insights gained in the "Growing Partners II – Child Development Fund"

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In a busy city like Hong Kong, many people are too preoccupied with their own lives to think of sparing time for others. Yet many youngsters are urgently in need of life mentors to give them advice and guidance in their formative years. Sr Joe Wu and Sr Oky Chan, both of whom have long been active in volunteer work, took up this role with two youngsters as part of “Growing Partners II - Child Development Fund (Batch 4)”, an initiative organised by The Boys’ & Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong (BGCA).

Wu, the co-founder of QnS Consultancy, is a seasoned volunteer who particularly enjoys working with youngsters. “It’s mutually beneficial for the mentors and mentees,” he says. “Through interaction with innocent kids, we have learned how to leave behind our stress and anxiety. I feel a surge of positive energy after meeting the kids.”

Wu is also involved in Project SPARKLE, a mentorship programme for children from grassroots households in Tin Shui Wai organised by HKIS. In 2014, he joined the BGCA’s “Growing Partners II – Child Development Fund (Batch 4)” Programme at HKIS’s recommendation. “A mentor is paired up with a mentee for a mentorship period of three years,” he explains. “Initially, I was unsure about the commitment. But it turned out that it does not take up too much time.”

For Chan, a desire for a mentor and role model during her adolescence motivated her to volunteer to help youngsters now. “I lacked a mentor or role model in my teenage years, and mainly talked to friends or overcame difficulties by myself when I encountered problems,” she says. “I have a passion for helping young people. I think I can share my experiences with them on the things I have done correctly and mistakes I made.” Like Wu, Chan, who works for a local developer, also participates in Project SPARKLE.

Wu and Chan have had a similar experience in mentoring young people. Their involvement began with providing advice and guidance to young graduates who were taking their surveyor qualifying examinations, and then evolved into mentoring youngsters, many of whom were from disadvantaged households.

BGCA’s “Growing Partners II – Child Development Fund (Batch 4)” was launched in 2014. Its goals are to help participating children – many from underprivileged households – build a positive self-image. This is done by helping them discover their skills and abilities; giving them more life experiences; building up their social and support networks; setting personal goals; and imparting advice on personal finance and saving habits.

To optimise the positive impact, BGCA matches individual mentors with mentees based on their personality traits and interests, says Wong Wai-yin, a project officer for Kwun Tong District. “The mentors are like role models and life companions for the youngsters,” she adds.

Wu says that it took a while for his mentee, 16-year old Heung Hang-tai, to warm to him nearly three years ago. “Hang-tai is reticent in the company of strangers,” he says. “But after we had built up trust with each other, he opened up. He sometimes asks me for advice on various things. He’s like a friend or younger brother to me.” Wu adds that he and Hang-tai, a Secondary Three student at Po Chiu Catholic Secondary School in Yau Tong, share a passion for building models and robots.

The two mentors derive satisfaction from having seen their mentees grow over the years. “Hang-tai and I meet approximately once a month,” Wu says. “We also join gatherings with other mentors and their mentees, and go to places such as country parks and boat trips as a group. As Hang-tai has matured, I find it easier to get along with him. His mother and younger sister say they have observed positive changes in him. He is now more outgoing and talkative. He takes the

initiative in telling me the extracurricular activities he enjoys at school. My aspiration for him is that he continues to be optimistic and outgoing.”

Hang-tai has fond memories of a squid fishing trip in Sai Kung, and how Wu helped him catch one. He admires Wu’s enthusiasm for helping others. “Joe has inspired me to respect others. I sometimes ask his advice about my family. He will guide me in analysing issues that I struggle with. I have also started to set aside part of my allowance as savings.”

Wu has also inspired Hang-tai with his choice of future career. “My aspiration is to enter the architecture or construction profession after graduation,” he says.

Shek Hiu-tong, a first-year nursing student at the Caritas Institute of Higher Education, has been Chan’s mentee for almost three years. Chan says mentors and mentees are expected to set the goals they want to achieve together, based on the mentees’ needs and the mentors’ capabilities. “The organisers put a lot of effort into holding a diverse range of activities,” she says. “There is a high degree of flexibility. Briefings are arranged beforehand so that mentors can be more effective in giving guidance.”

Hiu-tong, she adds, has grown up to become a mature and analytical individual. “At the beginning, I volunteered some advice. As our relationship deepened, she grew more mature. My approach changes after observing Hiu-tong’s character traits and needs. I now mainly share my experience as I do not want to make her feel as if I’m lecturing her. I hope to help her develop a sound mind so that she can independently tackle problems in the future. I also hope that when she needs help from someone, she knows I will be there for her.”

Hiu-tong says she appreciates the warmth that infuses her friendship with Chan. They sometimes have meals together and go hiking. “Although we do not meet very frequently, we stay in touch

constantly via WhatsApp,” Hiu-tong says. “I received lots of encouragement from Oky when I was taking the Diploma for Secondary Education exams. Our interaction is like that of friends. For me, it’s relaxing. Oky is knowledgeable about many things and willing to share her perspectives. I am less self-centred now, and have become more confident when interacting with people.”

Wong of BGCA says it is not an easy job to commit to the mentorship, as each period lasts three years. “The mentors keep the mentees company during the latter’s growth. It has a negative effect on some mentees if their mentors do not show up for a long period of time. When the mentors face any challenges or there are changes in a mentor’s circumstances, we encourage them to let us know so that we can support and assist them because we care about the development and the living conditions, of both mentees and mentors.” she says.

“We are heartened by the feedback from the mentors, mentees and parents, who all say that the three-year life companionship is a fulfilling and mutually beneficial experience.”

Chan thinks those who are interested in being mentors should take a deep look at themselves to see if they can really make a difference before making any commitment. “Because they should be positive role models for the youngsters, potential mentors first require some self-assessment to see whether they are suitable,” she says. “Then they need to look at the commitment and whether they are able to observe the needs of the mentees and devote their time in it. It’s also better that they have some working experience so that they have more to share.”

This article is published courtesy of Classified Post.

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以心灌溉

青少年愛冒險，容易犯錯，他們可能會在青春時期經歷重重困擾。因此，兩位工料測量師自願奉獻私人時間，幫助年輕一代成為逐漸成熟和敢於承擔的成年人。

Wilson Lau

在香港這個繁囂都市，許多人都為自己的生活忙得不可開交，無暇顧及他人；然而不少年青人在成長時期急需生活導師提供意見和指引。胡錦輝測量師及陳慧凌測量師一向積極參與義務工作，他們擔當藍朋（友師）的角色，與兩位青友（青少年）參加香港小童群益會舉辦的第四批「結伴再成長 II 一兒童發展基金計劃」。

胡錦輝為科量顧問有限公司的共同創辦人，義工經驗豐富，尤其喜愛接觸年輕人的工作。他說：「藍朋及青友的生命在互相燃點和互相感染。與單純的青友相處，讓我們學會拋開壓力及焦慮，每次與他們接觸後，我也會得到正能量。」

胡錦輝亦參與香港測量師學會舉辦的一項師友計劃——「擦亮童心」夥伴同行計劃，對象為天水圍基層家庭的小朋友。2014年，他經學會推薦參加香港小童群益會第四批「結伴再成長 II 一兒童發展基金計劃」。他表示：「一位藍朋與一位青友配對，進行為期三年的師友計劃。起初我不確定能否全心投入，但原來擔任藍朋不必花太多時間。」

陳慧凌在少年時期渴望有個啟蒙導師，因此她對幫助青少年義不容辭。她說：「我在青少年時期沒有啟蒙導師，遇到問題時都是向朋友傾訴或自行解決。我樂於幫助年青人，我想我可與他們分享過往的種種對錯。」在本港地產發展商工作的陳慧凌，亦加入「擦亮童心」夥伴同行計劃。

胡錦輝和陳慧凌在輔導年青人方面有相似的經驗，他們一開始都是為參加測量師專業考試的年輕畢業生提供意見及指導，繼而輔導其他青少年，當中有許多來自弱勢家庭。

香港小童群益會於2014年推行第四批「結伴再成長 II 一兒童發展基金計劃」，旨在協助參加計劃的兒童（很多來自弱勢家庭）建立正面的自我形象。內容包括協助他們發掘個人技能及能力、豐富他們的生活體驗、建立社交及支援網絡、訂立個人目標，以及提供個人財務及儲蓄習慣的建議。

觀塘區計劃主任黃慧妍姑娘指，香港小童群益會在配對藍朋和青友時，會考慮雙方的性格及興趣，以發揮最佳的師友同行效果。她亦表示：「藍朋的角色就像青友的榜樣和生活上的同伴。」

胡錦輝表示，約三年前，他花了好些時間才讓16歲的青友香亨泰放下戒心。他說：「亨泰面對陌生人時沉默寡言，但我們建立互信後，他終於敞開心扉。他有時會在各種事情上詢問我的意見，他就像我的朋友或弟弟一樣。」亨泰就讀油塘天主教普照中學三年級，胡錦輝補充說，他們都對建築模型及機械人感興趣。

兩位藍朋眼見青友多年來隨年漸長，都很有滿足感。胡錦輝說：「我和亨泰大概每個月見面一次，我們亦與其他藍朋和青友聚會，一起去郊野公園或乘船遊覽。我發現亨泰成熟後較易相處，他的母親和妹妹亦察覺到他有良好的改變。現在的他外向健談，會主動告訴我他喜歡的課外活動。我希望他能繼續保持樂觀開朗。」

西貢釣墨魚之旅為亨泰留下美好回憶，他記得當時胡錦輝如何幫他釣到一隻墨魚。他欣賞胡錦輝熱心助人，他表示：「胡錦輝讓我學會尊重他人，有時我會問他關於與家人相處的意見，他會引導我分析難題。我亦開始培養儲蓄的習慣。」

亨泰在就業路向方面亦受胡錦輝啟發。他謂：「我希望畢業後能投身建築業或建造業。」

明愛專上學院護理學一年級學生石曉彤，已成為陳慧凌的青友近三年。陳慧凌表示，雙方會根據青友的需要及藍朋的能力，訂立共同達成的目標。她說：「計劃同事會事先安排簡介會，讓藍朋在指導時獲得更大成效；亦會盡心盡力舉辦各種活動，這做法彈性很大。」

她亦表示，曉彤已成為一個成熟、善於分析的青年。「起初我會提出意見，但隨著我們的關係變得密切，她思想越趨成熟。在觀察曉彤的性格特質及需要後，我改變了相處方式。其後，我大多與她分享個人經驗，因為我不想令她覺得我在

「亨泰面對陌生人時沉默寡言，但我們建立互信後，他終於敞開心扉。」

說教。我希望協助她發展健康的心理質素，讓她將來能獨立處理問題，亦希望將來當她需要幫助時，知道我會協助。」

曉彤說，她很珍惜與陳慧凌那份溫暖的友誼，她們有時會一起吃飯、遠足。曉彤說：「雖然我們不常見面，但我們常透過 WhatsApp 保持聯絡。我應付香港中學文憑考試時，陳慧凌給我很多鼓勵。我們之間的相處就像朋友，我覺得很自在。陳慧凌學識豐富，並樂意分享她的看法。現在我不再那麼自我，與人相處亦更有自信。」

香港小童群益會計劃主任黃慧妍姑娘表示，師友計劃為期三年，能夠堅持擔當三年的藍朋實在不容易。她指：「若果藍朋少接觸青友，有些青友會誤以為藍朋不喜歡自己，這會對某些青友造成負面影響。假如藍朋遇上任何困難或生活狀況上有轉變，我們鼓勵他們讓我們知道，因為我們同時關心青友和藍朋的發展和生活狀態，希望為藍朋提供適切的支持和支援。」

「我很開心聽到一些藍朋、青友及青友的家長分享他們經歷了一個充實和有意義的三年。」

陳慧凌認為，有意擔任藍朋的人在作出決定之前，應檢視自己是否有能力。「因為藍朋是青年的榜樣，要成為藍朋，首先應自我評估，看自己是否勝任，有沒有洞察力可注意到青友的需要，然後要確認自己能否投入時間，一旦加入計劃，就應履行責任完成。為增強人生閱歷，藍朋宜有一定的工作經驗。」她說。

本文由《Classified Post》撰文。

香港小童群益會

第六批「結伴再成長 - 兒童發展基金計劃」

第六批「結伴再成長 - 兒童發展基金計劃」招募流程：

- 2017年 1月 - 2月** 招募合適藍朋及青友
- 2017年 2月 - 3月** 計劃簡介及面試
- 2017年 3月下旬** 公佈招募結果及為藍朋和青友作出配對
- 2017年 4月** 「第六批兒童發展基金」計劃正式開始

計劃對藍朋角色的期望：

在 2017年 4月 - 2020年 3月期間，每月與青友接觸最少一次
(如：個別聯絡/ 外出、參加計劃的小組活動、參加計劃的中央大型活動)

第四批「結伴再成長 - 兒童發展基金計劃」個案故事分享：

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFvjMv-ftU0>

如欲成為藍朋陪伴青友成長，請將閣下的姓名和聯絡電話電郵給計劃主任，香港小童群益會會作出個別聯絡和跟進。

計劃主任聯絡人：黃慧妍姑娘 或 林崑傑先生
電話：2343 3554
電郵：stephanie.wy.wong@bgca.org.hk, kk.lam@bgca.org.hk
地址：油塘高翔苑停車場大樓三樓一號



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