

Museteens 2015

St. Paul's College



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Introduction

“The Museteens 2015” is a programme organized by the Hong Kong Heritage Museum , for teenagers who were interested in culture and were willing to be an ambassadors to spread the culture of Hong Kong to other people. Intensive trainings started from July 2015 during the summer vacation until February. It was certainly hugely exhausting but more rewarding.

The Application & Interview

It was our History teacher, Ms Wong who recommended us to join this programme. At first, we thought it was nearly impossible to be selected as one of the participants since there were very limited vacancies. To apply for it, we were required to write an essay about the culture of Hong Kong. We wrote about the “fast food” culture of Hong Kong. In order to broaden our horizons on our chosen topic, we did some researches before writing the report. We were quite puzzled since there were thousands of information in the Internet, we had to choose some relevant and significant materials for our passage. Although the process was quite challenging, we completed successfully and we learnt a lot of valuable knowledge that we couldn’t learn in class. We submitted the application form just the day before the deadline. Not until we received the mail from the museum, did we realise we had passed the first selection. However, we were shocked to be notified that we had to attend an interview for the final selection. We did not know what would be questioned during the interview. This made us extremely nervous. On the day of the interview, we tried our best to calm down and not to be nervous. During the interview, the staff asked us some questions and invited us to introduce ourselves. In order to show that we were an “expert” in culture, we dig all our knowledge from our mind. After the interview, we did not even think of being selected as one of the participants as “more hope brings more disappointment”. After several weeks, both of us received an email telling that we were selected. We were overjoyed and really proud of ourselves to become one of the “Museteens”. Also, we were glad that our effort and time were not wasted!

Highlights: Workshops

During this programme, we made some crafts which we had not done these in school before. After we had listened to a talk about the history and development of the Conservation Office, we had a chance to paint its logo with our creation. The most interesting part was that the logo was made by plaster which was light grey. We were given a dried plaster and we could paint with any design that we wanted. After that, we were given a piece of magnet to stick it at the back of the plaster so that we could stick it on our refrigerators. Unfortunately, the magnet fell off and there was a big crack in my art work. My heart was torn apart when I saw the broken work. Anyway, both of us enjoyed the time of painting the logo of the Conservation Office and found that art was not that boring than we thought. We also visited the Marine Museum and the staff organised another workshop for us, it was about drawing a design on a plastic colourless plate. At first, we thought it was a difficult task as we were not good at designing and drawing. Luckily, we were given several paintings as samples. However, it was not child's play at all, those complicated lines and designs made me exhausted. After completing the drawing, it was not the end since we needed to put the plastic plate into a toaster for several minutes, we were quite curious on the reason behind. After "baking" for a while, we were totally surprised! The plastic plate was reduced almost half of its original size! How amazing it was! Luckily, we had listened to the instruction of the staff that we should have drawn in a bigger size. Otherwise, we had to use a magnifying glass to look at the details clearly. Through the workshops, we learnt so much knowledge and the workshops were really exciting and fun! We were really glad that we had an opportunity to make some crafts and we could take them home as souvenirs!

Highlights: Talks

First of all, the museum organised some talks for us. A talk about storing exhibits in the heritage museum drew our interest the most. Actually, people could donate anything that they thought it was an "exhibit" to the museum anytime. After some assessments and discussion, the staff would decide whether it would become one of their exhibits. We were shocked to know that all exhibits would be kept forever and they would be stored in specific rooms according to the materials they were made of. We really learnt a lot on how museums store exhibits. We really did not notice that most of the exhibits came from donations.. Those old things owned by citizens would not be wasted because they could donate them to the museum. Furthermore, they could be

kept properly by the museum and it would not be damaged easily compared if one keeps them by oneself. The most significant advantage is that people from different generations could admire about the life and culture in the past Hong Kong decades. If we find anything that has historical value, we are sure that we will donate them to the museum without hesitation! Besides, there was another talk introducing the Conservation Office. The main duty of the Conservation Office is to rehabilitate exhibits which is damaged due to different reasons. There were different kinds of methods to fix them, e.g. batik, textile dyeing, etc. These methods can recover the exhibits into their original forms. Without the work of Conservation Office, those exhibits could not be kept for a longer period of time and people would not know the history of people's lives and our city. Therefore, we realised the importance of the Conservation Office. Also, it is important to have the effort, professional knowledge and experience of the staff.

Highlights: Visits

The visits to other museums were really an eye-opener for both of us. We had an opportunity to visit every exhibit hall of the Heritage Museum: The New Territories Heritage Hall , The Chao Shao-an Gallery , The T.T. Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art , The Children's Discovery Gallery , The Cantonese Opera Hall and The Walking in the Dreams Exhibition. Among all the exhibition halls , "Walking in the Dreams" was one of our most favourite one. It is an exhibition showing how artists feel about dreams which are presented in different forms. One of them thought that dream is like a kite flying in the sky. The guide told us that the reason behind her thought was because she wanted to have freedom and she got a lot of pressure in her daily life. Besides visits at the Heritage Museum , there were also several outings held to broaden our horizons. The visit to the San Tung Uk Museum , for instance , let us explore the austere life of the villagers in the past and some Hakka culture. Observing the architecture of the monument, people's past lives and Chinese culture could also be seen , *e.g. the centred location and lifted-up position of the ancestral hall indicate how much the Chinese valued their ancestry. While the visit to the Maritime Museum broadened our knowledge on trading of Hong Kong , as a small fishing village, both in the past and nowadays.

Highlights: Internships

The Internship training was the most unforgettable and appealing part to both of us. We were given a precious opportunity to work as a guide at the Children's Discovery Gallery. It was really not an easy job since we needed to be very familiarised with the exhibits and needed to obtain a lot of relevant knowledge of the 8 theme zones regarding the Mai Po Marshes , Birds , Life on the Shore , Life in a Village, etc. Practical skills of guiding such as how to attract and draw the children's attention were also taught by some professional guides . In spite of the fact that memorising the lengthy pile of notes was already a great challenge to us , inviting the children to accept our tour guide was the hardest. We felt so embarrassed either when the girls looking at us in a terrified face and exaggerated eyes then running away to find their parents, or when the boys rejecting our offer directly by saying "I don't know you ." Thankfully, we overcame this difficulty successfully and took the initiative to speak to the kids. Through interacting with them, both of us thoroughly experienced their genuineness and cuteness. Their surprising and curious facial expressions were always our motivation to explain more to them. It was an experience for us to learn what working really was. It was neither a game nor a show , but what you do and say would influence people's mind of how they think about the Museum. It is a responsibility and there are always consequences behind. Frankly speaking, it was really not a piece of cake for us! On the other hand , being a guide improved our presentation and communication skills. We also needed to be very confident in order to be presentable and look professional . Both of us explored some of our hidden talents. We found out that one of us is quite good at introducing things to others while the other recognises high self-esteem and confidence.

Presentation

We gave a presentation about "Museteens 2015" at the school morning assembly. It was our first time presenting in front of a thousand people in hall. It was undoubtedly an extremely nervous experience but thankfully we did not let everyone down. It was really a precious time for us to take our role of ambassadors to promote Hong Kong culture to our schoolmates that we hoped that we had aroused their interests in cultural learning.

Thoughts & Reflections

Through participating in different programmes, our horizons were broadened. It attracted our interest in exploring culture from different aspects. For instance, after we visited the San Tung Uk Museum, we were amazed by the design of the houses by the ancestors who had careful thoughts. This drew our interest to discover more about the daily lives of Hong Kong citizens in the early 20th century. On the other hand, we also found out that culture can be presented in any form, it does not have to be a piece of artwork, a poem or some exhibits. It can be as simple as a photograph that we were once asked to take a photo without any requirements and explanation. From our point of view, every photo could reflect the culture because it shows the thinking of a photographer or reflects the culture of a city. In fact, culture is everywhere but sometimes we may not discover it. Recently, there are many controversial issues on cultural aspects in Hong Kong, e.g. many old shops have been forced to shut down due to the unaffordable rental prices. However, the government does not deal with this problem appropriately. As the “Museteens”, we think it is really important to protect our culture and it is our responsibility to spread the culture to every citizen.

Last but not least, although the programme nearly has come to an end, our interest in culture will never end. We are sure we will continue to explore and spread the culture to our society. We are very enthused and proud to be chosen as one of the “Museteens”. Thanks for all the staff who organised such a meaningful and enjoyable programme for us!

“Culture is the seasoning of a city. Without it, the city will become tasteless.”

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