

Love for Young Sprouts

Interview with Ms. CHEUK Sin Nin, Housemother of Children Section

Extending the Love of the Young Ones in One's Family to That of Other Families

After working as a housemother in the Children Section of Po Leung Kuk for 14 years, Ms. CHEUK regards Po Leung Kuk as her second home because the time she spent on the Kuk's children is more than that on her own children. She got married soon after leaving college, and gave birth to her first child two years later. When her two children grew up, and had their own circles of activities, Ms. CHEUK who had always assisted her husband and taught children at home came to realise: "Can I only take care of my family at home every day after so many years of learning?" She later talked with her mother who lived with her, who greatly encouraged her to find a job, so did her husband.

Parenting is not a simple piece of cake!

The two words, "Jia Zhang" (parenting), seemingly refer to the role of mother at home, but not until she started to work did she find parenting is actually not so simple. The job is challenging, for she should respond promptly to any frequent emergencies. She learned while working, feeling that she went forward and grew together with the children.

The job made her feel that time flies quickly. A girl who was a second grade primary school pupil at the first sight became a Form 5 student 10 years later. The girl who was usually nasty to her and argued with her on living trifles now poured out her heart including love affairs, to her. This made her feel that the care given to children should change along with their growth; besides clothing, food, living and transport needs, their inner feeling and emotional needs should also be cared for.

Ms. CHEUK said there were unhappy moments occasionally. She was more or less affected by children's running wild and becoming grumpy because of unreasonable requirements. However, she knew that everyone should face up to frustrations. As an adult, she should not let her emotion affect children, and should keep calm and be more considerate of children. She tried to shift children's focus and gave them space to soothe their emotion.

She examined herself from time to time. She learned from her work that each child is unique, not subject to a uniform standard, and the requirements for them should be adjusted according to their personalities and acceptance degree. Only in this way can they and she get along well with and accept each other.

Caring for Needs Other Than Material Needs

When asked what the Kuk's children's need, Ms. CHEUK said that adults' care and understanding are also needed besides education and material needs. In particular, secondary school students at an awkward age would be confronted with affection and interpersonal issues, so she often talked with secondary school students about news on current events, idols and other topics to learn more about their thoughts. In addition, encouraging children to build their own interpersonal network is also very important. As today's children are mostly self-centred, they always think themselves first and neglect people and things around them. They will be farther-sighted and more considerate if they can expand their interpersonal network to see and learn more, which will provide great help for their future growth.

She thought sponsors visiting the Kuk's children and volunteers who help children catch up on their studies are good-hearted because they not only give children toys and school supplies but also care for children, learn about their needs and lend corresponding support, which is the children's fortune.

Windfall amid unhappiness

Speaking of what impressed her most, she recalled that one evening she spent more than an hour persuading a girl who climbed to a dangerous height in a fit of temper. After calming down and returning to the dormitory, the girl made chocolate milk for her, which surprised her. Afterwards, the girl greeted her sweetly every time they met and brought back small presents for her after each trip. In her eyes, it is worthwhile to exchange an unpleasant experience for closer interpersonal relationship.

She felt that the relationship with children should be built little by little, and it is unwise to give up or bear a grudge due to some unpleasant events. Instead, more support and consideration should be given, and children will surely feel your care for them. On the other hand, you should also let children know that you are concerned about their misconducts, and unreasonable acts will also influence others; therefore, everyone should learn to control himself/herself and express his/her emotion in an acceptable range.