



AfL Encounters

Initiatives of Change

News from Action for Life

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Action in China

From 28th August to 28th September, Renjou and Grace LIU (IofC full time volunteers, Taiwan) went to China with 7 Action for Life graduators, LIU Hsiao Yun (AfL2&4, Taiwan), LIU Ching Che (AfL4, Taiwan), TAY San San (AfL4, Malaysia), NG Chui Cheng (AfL4, Malaysia), ZHANG Yue (AfL4, China), LEI Erh Ling (AfL3, Taiwan), and Ngan LE (AfL2, Vietnam). PAN Han Ting (AfL3&4, Taiwan) joined the group as well while she was in Shanghai visiting her uncle.

For Renjou & Grace, this trip is to carry out their commitments to visit mainland China twice a year, giving training and care to people there, and building up a network for future IofC work. For these 7 young AfLers, it is an opportunity to get trained and gain experiences. And for the 6 Chinese, who are bonded by the same blood but from different places, it is a great experiment to work as a team the first time.

During this month, the group visited 6 cities, Nanjing, Hefei, Xuzhou, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Hong Kong, taking part in various workshops and lectures given by Renjou, making presentations and meeting up many different people including Yue's friends. The group also took time to know each other better by sharing life stories, giving feedbacks, doing quiet times and quiet days together.



Giving and Learning

What the group has given did change many people's lives. Parents started to reflect on their own faults rather than just criticize the children; Couples learnt to respect each other's differences instead of arguing about who is right; Individuals got the chance to heal from the past and love for themselves again. One young lady shared after a presentation that "the training and sharing is really a wonderful experience, and I can feel the spirits of MRA (IofC). I really learned a lot, and had a new experience of life."

On the other hand, everyone in the group has learnt a lot. As Yue described, "By attending Renjou's workshops, we understood ourselves better; By listening to stories, we understood the meaning of life better; By visiting both historical and modern places, we understood China better; By interacting with local people, we understood their needs better; And by all the experiences we had together, we understood teamwork better."

ZHANG Yue (AfL4, China): "I learnt to be free from other's emotion, especially when it is related to me. I used to feel uneasy in such situation, being afraid of disappointing others and losing my reputation. But now I realized that it is behaviour of being a child. The adult way is to be ready to face it, take responsibilities of the parts where I did wrong, and leave the other's emotions to the other person."

Discovering China and Chinese

It is the first time for Ching Che, Erh Ling and Ngan to visit mainland China, so everything is new. Although San San, Cheng and Hsiao Yun have been to China before, there are still a lot more to discover.

LEI Erh Ling (AFL3, Taiwan): “I realized that Chinese culture and history have had a big impact on the values people are holding and the way they are living. Now I can appreciate Confucius, Taoism and Buddhism more.”

TAY San San (AFLA, Malaysia): “Life in China is very fast. I felt pushed and chased. Everyone is rushing. We met several disadvantaged groups, and I felt that there is a lot to do for them. On the other hand, coming here I realized how distant I am from my own ancestors’ history, culture and philosophy. This stimulated me to learn more about China and Chinese. As one friend told me, we have to walk into one’s shoes before we can help him.”

Life Impacts Life

Each life is special, precious, and unique. When we open our hearts to share, we get enriched and can appreciate our life more. What touches people most is the sparkle emitted when a soul hits another, where life long impact happens.

One of the “hits” the group encountered was with ZHENG Fu Sheng, the founder of Xinyuan Volunteer Service Center, who suffers from Ankylosing Spondylitis. This disease is called “living corpse” and “undying cancer” in the medical world, because it made a person’s joints stiff so that he couldn’t move anymore. Thus for more than 10 years, Mr. ZHENG



could only lie down or stand straight, without even turning his head around. Every morning, he had to spend at least 10 minutes to get up. After an operation he could sit for a while with other’s help, but it is still very painful.

Here is a life completely shut in a physical prison. What can he do? Mr. ZHENG shared with us that he used to feel down and hopeless, but people who helped him gave him light. One day, he thought, “Do I really want to lie on this bed waiting for death all my life? The answer is NO. My soul should not be confined by the body. It deserves grace and satisfaction.”

After that, Mr. ZHENG changed. He started to help himself as well as others, providing information on radio, setting up a library for the handicapped, giving speeches in public. His spirit touched many lives. Gradually more and more people followed him in his volunteer work, and that was the beginning of Xinyuan.

LIU Hsiao Yun (AFL2&4, Taiwan): “I was touched by his story, spirit, and the things he is doing for society. Just by simply watching him walk on the stage and stand there, I am already moved. I can see he is using his life beyond himself. I can see God gave him the sickness for a bigger purpose. I am healthy and can move easily, what is God’s plan for me then?”

Take the AfL Journey Online

Action for Life 4 ended on 9 May 2009. News from alumni will be printed monthly. Please check www.afl.iofc.org for program updates. We appreciate your ongoing support.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.” (Mahatma Gandhi)