

Goodbye Mental Illness, Hello Positive Thinking



Ho Sze Wa Stella, a year 4 student reading for a double degree in Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science had led her team (Hui Lok Yung, Ng Siu Ting) last year to participate in the University Creative Volunteer Project Competition "Hong Kong Positive Energy - Drive Away Pressure • Positive Thinking", successfully winning the second runner-up for the project proposal they formulated with a view to reduce adolescent stress. Realizing that academic stress and peer pressure are the two major sources of adolescent stress, her team suggested hosting a day-camp for youngsters to engage in a beach party and elderly visits, hoping they could bond with each other through games and grasp a broader social view. She believes joining voluntary services and interacting with underprivileged people enabled youths to reflect on things they have always taken for granted, reminding them that simple joy and positive thinking is found not in circumstances but in your state of mind. Although it is difficult to distinctly convey all their messages, Stella is grateful to apply the knowledge and experience she has

gained from her major in Education and minor in Counselling in practice. She would, for example, introduce interactive approaches like cooperative and experiential learning when drafting the proposal. Her case analyses attained from her counselling courses also inspire her to adopt special counselling approaches such as adventure-based counselling and psychotherapy when she is devising meaningful games ("Body Scan") for adolescents to play, allowing youngsters to better understand what their body is telling them so as to better alleviate their stress. HKU education has taught Stella not just concepts of case studies, but an understanding of what others are experiencing – mental illness is just like any other diseases, if left untreated, it could lead to severe consequences, but with a simple dose of empathy and love, they can be relieved.



Student Journalist: Ng Yee Sum, Summer (Arts, Year 2)