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Prescription for success at Tung Wah College

Since 1870, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) has been serving the community of Hong Kong, providing medical, community and education services to people in need. With a dedication to provide quality post-secondary education for the people of Hong Kong, the group established Tung Wah College (TWC), a self-financing teaching institution providing high-quality study programmes for secondary-school leavers, in 2010.

Taking advantage of the acknowledged strengths and expertise of TWGHs in health services, TWC provides one of the best nursing programmes in the city.

Zita Yau Kit-yin, from the class of 2013, was in the first batch of graduates of the Higher Diploma in Nursing offered at TWC. In 2011, Yau returned to Hong Kong from the UK after finishing her A-levels and was admitted into TWC. After some research, she found out that Tung Wah had an impressive history of running hospitals and the nursing programme offered by TWC was designed by a group of professionals in the field of nursing. This boosted her view of the programme. "I spent my secondary education in Britain, so I was not too familiar with the Hong Kong education scene. My

research on TWC gave me high confidence in the programme," she says.

Yau had always wanted a career in nursing. She started participating in a job-shadowing programme for nurses when she was in secondary school. "After learning more about the job through the activity, I thought nursing was the career for me," she says.

To fulfil her career dream of becoming a nurse, Yau applied for admission to TWC after finishing her A-levels. "I thought the programme was special because of the diversity of the students. There were secondary-school leavers like me and also mature students. I got to meet many interesting people. Some classmates were already working in the health-care industry and they wanted to get a higher qualification. There were also students from the pharmaceutical and banking fields who took the programme out of interest. The mix of students is really interesting," she says.

Yau was impressed by how the curriculum was able to prepare her to become a nurse. "At school we did a lot of group work and the teacher assigned the groups every time. You didn't always get to work with your friends – instead, you had to learn how to co-operate with different people. This is



an important skill that a nurse has to master, because in the hospital, nurses work as a team and you don't get to choose who you work with," she says.

As in all medical professions, practicum is a major component of a nurse's training. Yau said her two practicum experiences helped her overcome the hardships of being a nurse. "We put in 1,600 hours for practicum over the two-year programme. In the first year, I went to practicum with a group of classmates under the guidance of a teacher. We spent 10 weeks at a rehabilitation ward for stroke patients at the Kowloon Hospital taking care of patients. I remember helping an old lady change her diaper for the first time. I have practised it many times at school on a dummy, but performing it on a person is entirely different. I could not have done it without the assistance of my teacher and classmates," she says.

In her second year, Yau went to a surgical ward at Pok Oi Hospital. "I met a bad-tempered patient who was in a bad mood and a lot of pain after surgery. For me, the most challenging part about being a nurse is not the blood, spit and other nasty stuff, but dealing with the emotions. Patients and their families can be quite emotional and as a nurse you need to be able to withstand the pressure from them. I used to become upset too. I talked to teachers and they advised me to put myself in the patients' shoes

and try to understand their frustrations. I have learnt how to handle the pressure of being a nurse. Seeing patients recover is the driving force for me to be a nurse," she says.

After graduating from the programme in 2013, Yau earned the qualifications of an enrolled nurse and was soon offered a job at the Prince of Wales Hospital. "I plan to save up and study the nursing degree offered by Tung Wah College to become a registered nurse in the near future. For my long-term career plan, I have not decided yet. The great thing about nursing is that my options are open. I can choose to work on the front line or become a teacher," she says.

Apart from programmes related to health care, TWC is also readily expanding its scope to business. Queenie Chau Kwan-yi, who graduated from TWC's Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) programme majoring in Finance last year, says the case-study teaching method used by the College was inspiring. "The teachers put in a lot of hard work to provide us with the most up-to-date knowledge of the business world. They prepared lots of cases for us to study to help us learn how the business world operates. They are also very willing to spend time outside the classroom to give us guidance on projects. I really want to thank the teachers at TWC for their effort," she says.

Lending a helping hand

With its long and impressive history of providing community services, Tung Wah College highly encourages its students to get involved with volunteer work.

Zita Yau Kit-yin, a graduate of the Higher Diploma in Nursing who now works at the Prince of Wales Hospital, says her volunteering experiences have helped her become a better nurse. "Apart from classroom training, the College provided lots of opportunity for me to do volunteer work, which boosted my self-confidence and communication skills. I paid several visits to the elderly and the experience allowed me to learn how to get along with elderly people better. After doing volunteer work, I am no longer shy about talking to strangers and I am able to interact with elderly people, which is what a nurse needs to do on a daily basis," she says.

Queenie Chau Kwan-yi, a graduate of the Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) programme, echoes Yau's view on how volunteer work was able to help develop her career. "The experience widens the horizons of students. I came to understand a lot more about different parts of society," she says.

Chau recalled visiting some elderly people and helping them clean their homes. "It was an eye-opener for me. I came into contact with people that I don't usually get to meet. I also volunteered at Kadoorie Farm. I helped set up booths to sell products from the farm. For a business student, that was a really valuable learning experience as I had the chance to run a business," she says.

Besides volunteer work, the College also organises various visits and activities to help students develop their careers. "I have gone on trips to Ocean Park and Ngong Ping 360 to learn more about the job opportunities that those places are offering," Chau says. "The College's Student Affairs Office is very helpful. It posts many recruitment advertisements and information on internships to help students develop their career path. I am really impressed with what the school has done to help students secure employment."

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Queenie Chau,
graduate of the
Bachelor of Business
Administration
(Honours) programme



Photos: Sky Lip



Zita Yau says TWC's Higher Diploma in Nursing helped her learn how to handle the pressure of being a nurse