



## **96 year old volunteer brings joy to the faces of seniors at the Simon K.Y. Lee Seniors Care Home**

A volunteer of nine years for the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Multi-Level Care Society, Simon K.Y. Lee Seniors Care Home, Shu-Wing Mak who goes by Wayne Mak, is a welcome presence. A friendly smile and fluency in both Cantonese and Mandarin, Wayne is able to communicate with seniors who may otherwise feel isolated, lonely and helpless. Wayne talks and shares stories with the seniors and listens to their needs and concerns and communicates this to the staff to ensure their needs are being met. Although staff at the Care Home speaks both Cantonese and Mandarin and provide the outmost care and service, Wayne said “he feels that he creates companionship with the clients who may not have family or friends to visit them.”

When I met Wayne for the first time he was dressed in a trench coat and tweed suit and a matching page boy cap. This dapper fellow greeted me with a bright smile and was a true gentleman opening the doors for me as we toured the Seniors Care Home. You could hear the excitement in his voice as he spoke of the facilities and helpful staff who make the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Simon K.Y. Lee Seniors Care Home a comfortable and safe environment for those who seek community and the feeling of belonging. He proudly points out the dental and state of the art spa facilities for clients with disabilities as well as the memory boxes located on the outside of each clients rooms displaying family photos and mementos creating a sense of home and familiarity.

The Care Home is run on the Eden Alternative concept which is about teaching society to see the environments as habitats for human beings rather than facilities for the frail and elderly. It states we must learn what Mother Nature has to teach us about the creation of vibrant and vigorous habitats. As we tour each corridor appropriately named Pine, Bamboo, Cherry, Cedar and Birch, to reflect the Eden Alternative Concept, Wayne shows me the compassion corner where there are chairs, collages and children’s toys for families to come and extend their visits with their parent(s) in a warm and family



orientated atmosphere. He is most proud of the Snoezelen centre which is a private therapeutic treatment room focusing on the five senses (sight, smell, touch and sound) where those seniors who may feel agitated or in need of a calm environment can come to enjoy and decompress. As we sit in this magical room with soft music, blues and reds emanating from a glass tube with water bubbles and calming aquatic scenes projecting on the wall, Wayne tells me “I am especially proud as I helped to make this room possible through organizing special events such as dinners and raffles to raise money for the equipment.” He also mentions “from 2006 to 2009 I helped to raise over \$100,000 for the Care Home.”

As we enter the recreation and physiotherapy rooms, the tenants in the facility smile wave and exchange friendly words with Wayne. It is clear that Wayne is an integral part of the Care Home when you see how many faces light up as he enters a room. Staff warmly extend their appreciation to Wayne and tell me of the many activities at the centre including dance lessons, games, cooking, crafts, gardening and fitness.

The Care Home has also been the host of Summer Kids Camps where kids interact with seniors as well as learn to respect and understand their elders and participate in programs such as the Mini Olympic Games.

When I asked Wayne how he came to volunteer at the Care Home I notice Wayne’s eyes sadden when he explains that he was supposed to bring his wife to the Simon K.Y. Lee Senior Care Home in 2001 when he was no longer able to care for her. Unfortunately his wife passed away before she was admitted. Wayne says “she would have liked to be here and when I am here I feel like she is with me, this is my home.” Wayne is an immigrant from Hong Kong who moved here over 30 years ago where he was a merchant and took up writing as a hobby. When he came to Vancouver to retire, he began writing for the Sing Tao Daily and Ming Pao Daily, local Vancouver Chinese Newspapers. Today Wayne writes for the Evergreen News published by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. which has both a local and international readership. Wayne uses his creative writing abilities to report local events as well as takes photos and conduct interviews to create stories for readers to enjoy. At 96 Wayne has no intention of slowing down, he is currently the Goodwill Ambassador of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. where he continues to assist with raising funds for equipment and programs for the seniors at the Simon K.Y. Lee Senior Care Home. Wayne continues to visits the Care Home every Thursday and will continue doing as long as he is able, which I think is going to be quite a long while.

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